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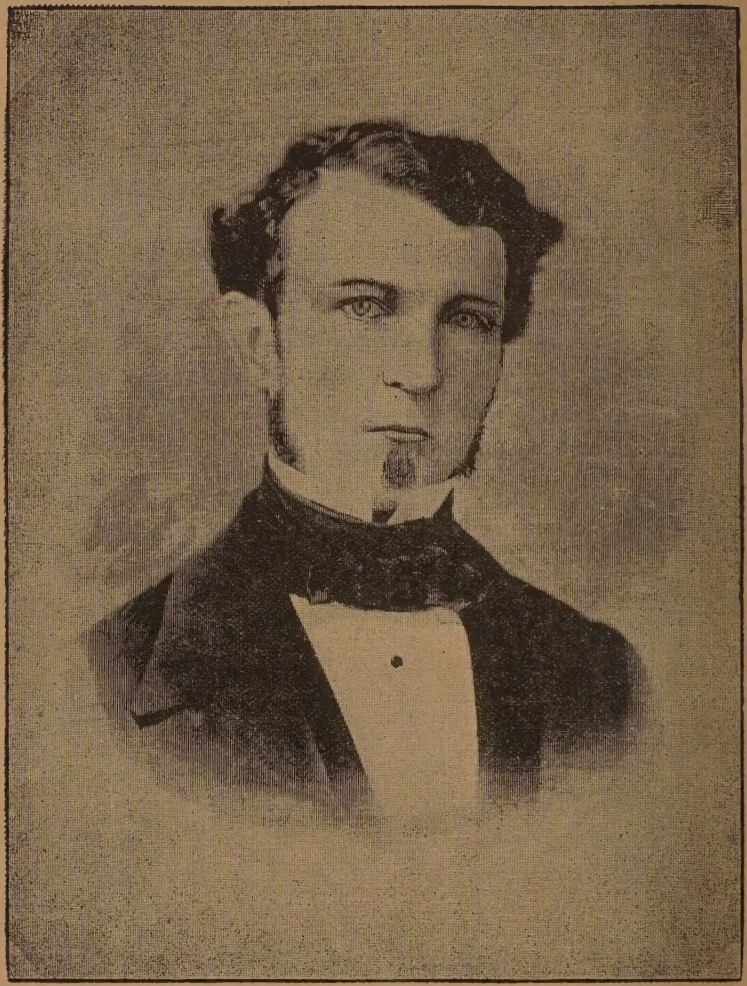

RODERICK J. FLANAGAN.

Engraved from a Photograph in possession of the Author's Brother (Mr. E. F. Flanagan), taken in 1862

P6152

THE

ABORIGINES OF AUSTRALIA

BY

RODERICK J. FLANAGAN

Author of "The History of New South Wales," "Australian and other Poems," &c.

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PREFACE

THE series of papers contained in this volume will not, it is hoped, prove the least appropriate of the publications which have marked the Centenary of Australian colonization. They originally appeared in the Sydney *Empire*, in 1853-4, of which journal the present Premier of New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes, was then proprietor and editor. No doubt it was the author's intention to issue them in a collected shape. Whatever plans he may have formed in that respect were, however, cut short by his early death, which event took place somewhat suddenly, in London, while the sheets of his well-known "History of New South Wales" were passing through the press. That work has since taken its place as a standard authority on the subject with which it deals. Mr. Flanagan was only thirty-three when he died, and quite a young man—he was under twenty-five—when his "Studies on the Aborigines" were written.

It may be mentioned that the idea of the history was suggested to him in the course of his researches concerning the first possessors of the soil. The result of his labours in the latter direction may, therefore,

fittingly supply a companion book to that in which he has told the story of European settlement on the shores of Australia.

The science of ethnology has made considerable strides during the period which has elapsed since these studies first saw the light. With the aid of philology, it has cleared up much, in regard of racial problems, that had previously seemed impenetrably obscure; but it cannot be said to have shed any great amount of new light on the origin of the race in question. Conjecture, more or less vague, is mainly what the inquirer has to depend on for guidance. Opinions as to what particular branch of the human family the Australian aboriginal belongs differ almost as widely now as when Mr. Flanagan discussed the matter, thirty-five years ago. The view which he took was, as will be seen, that at some period "in the dark backward and abysm of time," and prior to their arrival in Australia, these people had possibly possessed at least a few germs of civilization, which it was also possible to conceive as having been soon lost under the conditions which the struggle for existence imposed on them in their new home. Be this as it may, it is generally admitted at the present day that the natural intelligence of the aboriginal natives of Australia is by no means of a despicable order, and that they can boast of not a few qualities deserving of more careful development than they have commonly received at the hands of the white man. Such facts lend additional melancholy to the spectacle of

the rapid disappearance of the unfortunate race. In New South Wales, as in the neighbouring colony of Victoria, the process of decay has been terribly swift :

> Amidst the forests where they revel,
> There rings no hunter's shout.

The aborigines, in both colonies, have been reduced to a comparative handful, a too sure presage, it is to be feared, of the doom which awaits them all.

Notwithstanding the existence of other valuable, and, in some instances, more elaborate, accounts of the primitive inhabitants of this country, it is to be presumed that the information furnished in the following pages will have a special interest of its own, and that it will not be altogether in vain that it has been disentombed from the old files of the *Empire*. It has not been thought advisable to interfere in any way with the text, but, excepting obvious typographical errors, to leave it as it was left.

SYDNEY,
26th January, 1888.

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THE ABORIGINES OF AUSTRALIA.

CHAPTER I.

THEIR ORIGIN—PROBABLE PERIOD OF THEIR ARRIVAL.

No branch of that large section of the human race which, whether by the colour of their skin or by some other natural or fortuitous circumstance, has received from nature, or the hand of Providence, the impress of inferiority, seems to have occupied less of the attention or research of civilization and philosophy than the portion of the sable sons of earth inhabiting the Australian continent. This, no doubt, is in a great measure owing to that physical inferiority which this people certainly exhibit in as great a degree as almost any other race of men known. Their isolated and scattered position, their roving mode of life, their unwarlike character, their rude and all but harmless weapons, the utter absence of anything like concert in their habits and operations, have ever rendered them unimportant neighbours and feeble and insignificant enemies. Incapable of creating any considerable mischief, they have never, by war or by their opposition to the progress of the white man,

forced themselves on the attention either of the governments or philanthropists of Europe. Another cause, no doubt, of the unbroken obscurity in which the history of the aborigines of this territory has been permitted to remain involved, is the extreme difficulty which, from the very first, presents itself to the dispelling of the thick cloud which hangs around the primeval origin and subsequent progress of the Australian tribes. No monumental ruin, however obscure, or however feebly defined, has ever been discovered, throughout the length and breadth of the country, which might afford a clue to the civilization or barbarism of the people from whom they have descended. No form of worship, or well-defined religious belief, such as is found amongst almost all other barbarians, suggests the particular class of worshippers to which they originally belonged. No arts, however rude—none, however, in any way worthy the name—attest in the remotest degree, by their progress and condition, the period during which they might have been practised. Conjecture and analogy alone remain to guide the inquirer in any investigation touching the original inhabitants of the Australian wilds.

In entering on any investigation touching a people the first inquiry which naturally suggests itself is that concerning their origin. In assigning to the aborigines of Australia their position amongst the several families into which the human race is divided some difference of opinion prevails. Some have affirmed

that they are a mixture of two races, which, although generally classed under the one head, nevertheless possess very strongly marked peculiarities and distinctions—namely, the Malayan and Papuan or Australnegro races. This supposition is doubtless grounded on certain physical peculiarities, favourable to the belief that some admixture of the negro blood of New Guinea prevails amongst the New Hollanders. Foremost among these peculiarities are their hair and lips, the former presenting the half-woolly texture of the negro, while the latter, by their thickness, would also seem to indicate some slight connection with that caste. The best and most industrious writers on the subject, however, repudiate this alleged mixture of races in the New Hollander, deriving his origin directly from the Malays. This opinion seems based on the most substantial reasoning, and is the one most generally received. Although, as before observed, in some particulars the natives of New Holland may afford some slight indications of negro peculiarities, a closer examination must tend to place the former in a position much superior to any in which the Papuans can be viewed. These latter are described as a race of woolly-headed, thick-lipped negroes, slightly differing in feature from those of Africa, of a lighter colour than the latter, and scarcely ever exceeding five feet in height. Here everyone at all acquainted with the aboriginal race of this continent must perceive that the analogy altogether fails; the New Hollander is so far from being low of stature, that his height seldom, if

ever, falls below five feet, and travellers in the interior mention instances of aborigines having attained a stature of six feet one, two, or even three inches, while the beautiful symmetry and excellent proportions of some individuals among them have often excited the wonder and admiration of Europeans. These last-mentioned facts are sufficient of themselves to show that, however incredible it may appear to those who have heretofore regarded the New Hollander as a being only one remove above some of the inferior animals, the latter can still put forth some very strong and cogent arguments in support of the supposition that he is part and parcel of that better order of men who, originally inhabiting the peninsula of Malacca, have spread themselves in the course of ages over some of the finest groups in the South Seas, to New Zealand, and the Sandwich Islands. Another strong argument against the supposition that the tribes of New Holland consist of an admixture of a superior and inferior race of men is that these tribes are now, beyond doubt, universally identical. This fact, so far from being doubted, has never been called in question. Had the negroes of Papua introduced themselves into the island at any time prior or anterior to, or simultaneously with, the advent of the Malayan adventurers, some traces of them as a distinct and separate people must still exist. Granted even that the two races might, as the supporters of that theory allege, have amalgamated into one people, still in a territory so vast, and among tribes so fractional and so numerous,

some indubitable traces of the double origin must have remained. If it be argued, as no doubt it may, that the natives of New Holland, in the best light in which they can be viewed, present an aspect altogether inferior to those other nations of undoubted Malayan origin who inhabit the numerous islands of the southern ocean, it must be borne in mind that races, like individuals, in the course of time lose their peculiarities; and where more likely to change for the worse than in a country like Australia, ever extending, ever presenting new inducements or pressing necessities to roam, neither in its natural productions nor in its territorial features presenting those attractions which alone could induce a barbarous or semi-barbarous people to congregate, to settle, and to improve? Hence, from the moment the first voyager arrived in his galley or canoe on the shores of Australia he became a new being; and hence the present aboriginal inhabitant of New Holland is to be regarded as an order of man peculiar to the country and the clime in which he has been found. It is not intended to show that the Australian aboriginal of the present day is equal in appearance, in physical development, or even in mental endowments, to the inhabitants of the Spice Islands, of New Zealand, or Tahiti; sufficient will have been effected if it can be shown that, if inferior to the inhabitants of those islands, circumstances alone, and the more unfavourable position and features of the country to which fate originally guided him, are to be blamed for that result.

The next question which presents itself to the inquirer after the antiquity of the New Hollander is the period of his arrival. Here, again, conjecture is the only guide which presents itself by which to attain to any approximation to truth. For certain it is that those early colonists of Australia set up no adequate monument to commemorate the event to future ages, or if they did it is equally certain that no such memorial has survived to record the circumstances of its construction. That the present aboriginal tribes of Australia are, however, the descendants of some particular batch of adventurers it is easy to suppose. The same cause which leads to the inference that the whole are the posterity of the same original stock—namely, the identity of the tribes—will readily confirm the belief that the progenitors of the present race arrived simultaneously, or at all events within a very limited period. Navigation, even of that rude description practised among savages, and which consists merely in propelling a canoe from one island to another, or from one bay or headland to another, had long been a dead letter on the shores of the Australian continent. Hence we may readily suppose that for a long period of time, or probably ever since their first arrival, they had severed that connecting link which united them with their original country.

But when did that dispersion take place which gave its first inhabitants to New Holland? Were its first colonists a section of those adventurers who, according to some writers, among the first of whom is Dr. Lang,

in his "History of the Polynesian Nation," during the era immediately succeeding the Deluge issued forth from their homes in the southern extremity of Asia on the western ocean, colonized in their course that chain of islands which forms a connecting link between two worlds in the southern seas, and after encountering incredible hardships and dangers, finally succeeded in reaching the western coast of the American continent, where their descendants founded mighty civilized nations, the decayed remnants only of which existed in Mexico and Peru when these regions were explored by the discoverers and conquerors who followed in the track of Columbus? Or is the original colonization of New Holland the result of some later exodus? If its first inhabitants did not arrive in the days of Shem and Ham, did they not arrive before Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt? If not prior to that event, did they not arrive before the founding of the Roman Empire? And if not before that period, did they not arrive before the Christian era? And if not then, at what period since? On these points all is uncertainty. No monuments, no traditions, no worship, no method even of computing time exist to aid speculation. By means of this latter light alone we arrive at the conclusion that if the original founders of the race who now inhabit the Australian wilderness did not go forth at the early period assigned to the dispersion of the founders of the Indo-American people, they at all events must have emigrated at some very early period in the world's history. Monuments, in the ordinary

sense of the term, certainly do not exist to fix the precise period; but testimonies indubitable and incontrovertible attest the antiquity of their coming; and these are—first, the presence of their descendants in every part of the vast continent; and, secondly, the peculiarities of these descendants in mind and form distinguishing them from all other nations. It required no inconsiderable space of time to enable a barbarous people, first landing at some point in the extreme north of the Australian territory, to pass through the immense intervening forests, and over the rugged mountains or burning plains of the interior wilderness, and to establish themselves as they have done on the shores and rivers of the extreme south, west, and east; and to render the New Hollander the changed and degenerate being which he now appears, so different from those descendants from the same stock—the New Zealander, the Tahitian, and the American Indian—must have been the work of ages.

CHAPTER II.

CAUSES WHICH LED TO THEIR DISPERSION—CAUSES OF DEGENERACY—SUPERIORITY OF NORTHERN ABORIGINES—NUMERICAL FORCE OF TRIBES—SYSTEM OF CHIEFSHIP—CUSTOMS.

TAKING it for granted, which we may readily do, from the most superficial acquaintance with the aborigines, as well as from the testimony of those who have had the most ample opportunity of discovering and delineating their characteristics, that the evidences of a very high order of humanity very often and very strikingly become manifest in their composition and character, the question suggests itself how they have, generally speaking, fallen so low as they are now found. Holding by the theory of their Malayan origin, this degeneracy appears the more striking when we consider that in their voyage to the shores of their future home they encountered none of those hardships and excessive privations which their more adventurous brethren endured in their long and perilous voyages westward—privations and hardships which, according to some speculations, first gave rise to the practice of cannibalism. That they could have encountered none of these dispiriting and inhumanizing hardships, almost inseparable from a protracted

sea voyage when the only appliances are those which comparative barbarism supplies, the relative geographical positions of the country from which they emerged, and that which was the object of their search, will at once render demonstrable. Such a voyage in such seas must, to a people whose highest objects were a mere sustenance and the excitement of adventure, have been one more of pleasure than of difficulty. Island after island, rising in rapid succession before the eyes of the explorers, must have afforded, during the succession of days and weeks occupied in the voyage, all the charm and variety of a natural panorama, until in due time the coasts and ranges of New Holland finally presented themselves to the eyes of the voyagers—the destined land of their future homes and fortunes. The next position in which we find the future inhabitant of Australia is the land of promise gained, roaming delighted among the thick forests and the delightful valleys, of which he is thereafter to be lord and master. And now comes, perhaps, the most critical period in his history. If the newly-arrived adventurers were the offshoot of some of the civilized branches of the human family on the opposite shores, would they not first of all set about forming society in the newly-discovered territory, in conformity with the usages and customs of the land they had left? Would they not establish some system of government similar to that under which they had formerly lived? Would they not initiate some form of worship similar to that which they had been accus-

tomed to practice, and in conformity with their ideas of religion? Indubitably all these things the new settlers would be likely to do, and, most probably, all these proceedings were in due order gone through; but days and weeks passed over and a great change was wrought in the spirit of the adventurer. The land was still fair, the climate genial, and the spirit of enterprise still strong and buoyant; but the stern realities of life began to press very severely. What provisions remained of their sea stock, if any, were soon consumed. The hunting grounds in the immediate vicinity of the rude settlement were quickly cleared of their numerous stock to supply immediate wants, and hunger appeared in perspective. What, then, was to be done? Were they to retrace their steps, and to return to the country whence they came? Two serious obstacles presented themselves to this movement. The necessary sea provisions for even a very short voyage were wanting, and their frail barks, shattered by the effects of the former voyage and the action of a burning sun on their timbers, were altogether unfit a second time to encounter the surges of the ocean. Thus precluded from the possibility of return, these primitive colonists, resigning themselves to a lot which they could not avert, became permanent denizens of the Australian forests. Nor was this the worst of their fate. The same misfortune which confined them within the shores of the new coasts pursued them still further, and made them a roaming people—perpetual wanderers over its interminable

wilds. No nutritious and abundant root, such as the potato or the yam, springing spontaneously in the soil or requiring but little labour in its production, presented a never-failing means of sustenance, and an inducement to form settled communities; no cocoanut or bread-fruit tree, or maize plant, bending beneath the weight of their respective products, charmed the vision or solaced the loneliness of the wanderer. No mighty river or broad lake, with smooth, clear surface, teeming with finny life, and surrounded by all the necessaries and charms of existence, invited the wanderers to establish themselves permanently on its fertile banks. All was bleak barrenness and disheartening scarcity. One only means of human sustenance did the vast territory present—the animal tribes which bounded over its plains, or scampered up and down the trunks and branches of the towering trees; and to procure this means of supporting life in himself and household, the New Hollander was condemned to a life of perpetual roaming—a life of perpetual savageness—ever impelled by the silent but imperative watchword, onward! Hence that dispersion; hence those outward symptoms of the most complete barbarism; hence, in fine, that degeneracy and that debasement of the human character which a certain class of reasoners are ever ready to seize upon with the utmost avidity, for the purpose of endeavouring to belie the most simple principles of philosophy, as well as the first teachings of revelation.

But while admitting the worst that can be advanced

against him, it is but right to mention that the aboriginal of Australia is to be viewed in some instances in a state in which the evidences of extreme degeneracy are in a great degree, if not altogether, wanting. Speaking of some natives with whom he came into contact in the neighbourhood of Port Essington, Captain Stokes, in the narrative of his "Discoveries in Australia," says :—

"I could not help comparing the bold, fearless manner in which they came towards us—their fine manly bearing, head erect, no crouching or averting of eye—with the miserable objects I had seen at Sydney. I now beheld man in his wild state, and, reader, rest assured there is nothing can equal such a sight."

Here is a most striking exception to that general falling-off so manifest in the Australian tribes—an exception the more worthy of note, and more fully illustrating our idea, as it is presented in the immediate neighbourhood of what we have reason to believe was the first landing-place of the founders of the entire race.

The next position in which it will be necessary to review the New Hollander, in order to see him thoroughly, is in his political and social relations—if such terms may be used without exciting a smile—as imposed by his new state. In issuing forth into the wilderness, in quest of sustenance and adventure, the impossibility of proceeding for any length of time in large bodies must very soon have forced itself upon the attention of the pilgrims. The few roots and herbs which they found fit for food were only to be

procured in very small quantities; the straggling streams interspersed throughout their journey were, in many instances, altogether destitute of fish, and where the finny tribes existed small quantities only were to be procured from the niggard waters; numerous wild animals, it is true, scampered along the plains, or concealed themselves in the thick underwood, while some wild birds of a tempting aspect were present in the wilds; but these were only to be procured by the exercise of considerable skill, industry, and patience. Hence the scarcity of the necessaries of life at once pointed out the inconvenience of proceeding in large numbers, and hence the division of the wayfaring multitude into numerous tribes must have followed almost immediately after their first entrance into the wilderness, each division placing itself under the guidance of a leading spirit, some redoubtable warrior or hoary sage, on whose prowess or judgment they had learnt to rely, and in whose protection and guidance they felt secure. Here was the origin of these infinitesimal divisions into which the sable population of Australia is found divided. The numbers of individuals of which these tribes generally consist have been variously estimated. Some authorities have mentioned tribes numbering as many as a thousand men. The general tendency of our information on these matters, however, is opposed to the belief that any of the aboriginal tribes are numerically so large and powerful as these numbers would imply. It is very doubtful, indeed, whether

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any tribes could be found numbering altogether—men, women, and children—many more individuals than 1,000, or about 200 full-grown men. It is probable, however, that in their wars and on particular occasions alliances and conjunctions may be formed, when very large numbers, equal to or exceeding the figures mentioned, are brought together, and for a limited time associate and act in concert.

Another question which has formed the subject of dissent and debate is the system of governance which prevails in the respective tribes, it being generally understood that authority or unity of no description whatever extends further. Not only, indeed, is the plan of government which obtains among the New Hollanders a subject of doubt, but it has been questioned whether any definite or fixed system of chiefship or government at all exists amongst them. This latter idea cannot, however, on any known analogy or principle be sustained. That they have no chiefs, such as the caciques of the American Indians, or the magnates of the South Sea Islands, New Zealand, &c., whose sway is derived from ancestors, and handed down from father to son, and who are at once the objects of the veneration and respect of their lieges, we have reason to believe. The instances are, indeed, numerous of individuals among them, in the neighbourhood of European settlements, receiving the appellations of chiefs of their tribes. But those distinctions are as often, or more so, the result of some whim of the Europeans as any agreement or authority among

themselves ; and when such titles do happen to be admitted by the aborigines themselves it is a title tacitly allowed to the individual more from his ruling qualities than from any other cause, by which tacit agreement a certain deference is paid to those qualities, while he is able to exhibit them personally, but no longer—a rule perfectly equitable and consistent among savages, where mere physical qualities are so likely to prevail over all others. Some years since nothing was more common than to observe among the groups of aborigines who usually assembled in the neighbourhood of Sydney some individual decked out in the gorgeous appendages of a half-moon of brass, suspended by a chain of the same metal around the neck, a cast-off cocked hat of some military officer, bending down under the weight of its feather, placed in any and every position on the crown of the head ; the coat and trousers—if such were worn—in keeping or not, as circumstances happened, with the gorgeous headpiece. These individuals were uniformly looked upon by the Europeans as kings or chiefs among their sable brethren, and spoken of as such, but that they in reality enjoyed no such dignities might readily be inferred from the inveterate vice of mendicancy in which they indulged in common with their supposed subjects, the cocked hat of the "king" being frequently degraded to the "base uses" of receiving the half-pence and pence which a long series of the most profound and comical bows and salaams had drawn from the pockets of the passers-by. The supposition

that no regular system of chiefship prevails among the aborigines receives authority from many facts. In all accounts of their wars and battles derived from various sources, the absence of any allusions to a recognized chief or leader, exercising a supreme and decided command, is striking. Great warriors they certainly have, who on such occasions take prominent positions and play conspicuous parts ; but that such exercise any authority or influence over the acts or conduct of the others, except by a tacit understanding, there is reason to doubt. In some minute descriptions of their battles, related by eye-witnesses, the old women of the tribes are often made to occupy the position of chiefs in command on such occasions, stepping in front of the opposing lines, armed with spear and shield, haranguing the warriors in the most animating terms, working themselves into a frightful state of excitement, and ending their parts by hurling their weapons at the ranks of the enemy—thus giving the signal for the general onslaught. Many other particulars could be adduced to show that among the aborigines authority of a fixed and definite character, whether centred in individuals of the body or contained in some well-known and well-established laws, is altogether wanting. The mere suggestions of instinct and the most palpable laws of nature alone seem to have any weight amongst them. This absence of authority is also manifested strongly in all their social relations ; but in none more strikingly than in their system of courtship and matrimony, the future wife being in almost every

instance carried off by her admirer by main force ; consideration being seldom or never had either to the consent of the damsel herself, the approbation of her relatives, or the disposition of the tribe ; and very rarely does it seem that such abductions are either resisted or resented.

From the general tendency of these and many other facts which could be adduced, it becomes apparent that the patriarchal form of government is that to which the system of rule prevalent amongst the aborigines most nearly approximates. Whether this be the result of ideas derived from their remote ancestors, or of their roving and unsettled mode of life, or whether it be the result of mere chance, obtaining in the first instance by accident, and perpetuated through succeeding time, are matters on which the mind may speculate, but on which it would be very difficult to arrive at a settled conclusion.

CHAPTER III.

IDEAS OF A SUPREME BEING — BELIEF IN A FUTURE STATE—IDOLATRY UNKNOWN—GERMS OF ARTISTIC SKILL.

It has been shown that whatever shade of authority exists among the aborigines partakes of the patriarchal kind. From whatever original cause this may have sprung, it indicates a state of things highly favourable to the New Hollander, as it shows that, however unpropitiously circumstances may have operated in his regard, however low he may have fallen, he has preserved himself free from the imputation of one great crime—the voluntary sacrifice of his freedom. It also indicates another fact, still more favourable, which is, that though, in the course of his long and desolate wanderings, he may have lost those fixed and definite ideas of the Creator which he derived from his fathers, he has not set up a human deity in His stead.

Now comes one of the most important considerations which can possibly be brought under review, whether in connection with the savage tribes of Australia or the most polished and enlightened of mankind. This consideration relates to their ideas and opinions as to a Supreme Being and a second state of existence. For several reasons this is one of the most difficult questions to determine in connection with

them. The almost general unacquaintance with their language, their inability to enter into anything like a metaphysical conversation, and perhaps the general indisposition on the part of Europeans to make minute inquiries touching such matters—all these combined have tended to render mythological opinions of the aboriginal a matter of more than ordinary doubt and obscurity. The general scope of what information we do possess on the matter leads to the opinion that they hold belief in a Supernatural Being, exercising an unseen but extraordinary power over their whole race. This power, however, strange to say, is never mentioned by them as being exercised otherwise than for evil. Hence, in rendering his appellation into English, he is uniformly called after the Prince of Darkness—"Devil." Thunder, lightning, storms, and the other atmospheric or elemental disruptions are supposed to be among the chief manifestations of his power and wrath. Accordingly, whenever the elements are so disturbed, the blacks exhibit every symptom of extreme fear, concealing themselves in the most remote recesses of their haunts and habitations. The neighbourhood of extinct or smouldering volcanoes, of which several are dispersed throughout the territory, are avoided with a superstitious awe, as the favourite hiding-place of the much-dreaded evil genius. Very deep or lonely lagoons and water-holes are also shunned for the same reason. Whenever an individual disappears from a tribe in a mysterious manner, and is not again heard of, his

absence is always attributed to the agency of the evil one, who is supposed to have carried him off to his unhallowed retreats.

It has heretofore been pretty generally entertained as a well-grounded belief that no other supernatural power besides this terror of the wilds is known to the New Hollander. Nor does the power with which he is invested, in the opinion of his believers, appear to be exercised with discrimination, extending only over the wicked, and punishing only the perpetrators of guilt. Caprice is the only rule of action attributed to him in all his dealings. An instance is recorded by a gentleman who took a considerable share of interest in the aboriginal race which will illustrate the extreme darkness investing their theological notions. In his endeavours to reflect on their understandings some of the simplest lights of truth, he sought on several occasions to impress them with the belief that their devil—or "debble debble," as they more generally called him—only destroyed or injured evil-doers, such as by turbulence, cruelty, and unkindness had been the cause of evil to their relatives or their tribe. This distinction, however, they are described as being utterly unable to comprehend, and sceptic mirth was the only manifestation drawn from the sable audience by the philanthropist's preaching.

That, however, they really have no knowledge of a supreme benevolent power, or that this power or spirit of which they know is in reality considered by them a purely evil one, it is very difficult to believe. But,

without entering into any close reasoning on the subject, which our scanty information on the matter would no doubt render futile, it is impossible not to deduce from what we do know certain inferences favourable to the character of these primitive tribes. Whether or not they have any satisfactory idea of a Supreme Being, worshipped by the most refined and most barbarous as "Jehovah, Jove, or Lord," may be a matter of doubt; but that the object of their highest regard is a spirit, and not a material or visible being or object, is a matter of certainty. In this is not the Australian savage superior to the civilized inhabitants of Peru, whose deity was the sun, or the polished and luxurious Hindostanee, who to this day retains his hideous idols and monstrous pagan worship?

Next in order, as intimately bound up with the questions just considered, come the ideas of the New Hollander with reference to a future state of existence. Here we will have presented a conception of the human mind in its most uncultured state at once novel and singular. The American Indian, when he first beheld the European, with his mighty ships, his terrible implements of war, his glittering armour and silken apparel, deemed it impossible that such a being could be a mere inhabitant of the earth, possessed of the same attributes, the same passions and feelings as himself; and hence that simple race for many years regarded the Europeans as an order of beings descended from the skies, and endowed with

celestial powers and celestial virtues. The New Hollander, in like manner, invested the white man, when his presence first broke on his vision, with attributes, if not divine, at least with a superiority which in his mind rendered him infinitely beyond the sphere of his notions of humanity. His imagination or his vanity, however, gave rise to an idea which never entered into the mind of the Indian or any other savage previously. He believed that in every one of the new beings before him he beheld some one of his ancestors or relatives returned from the land whence his whole race are translated after death, there to enter on a new and exalted state of existence. This would appear, from every source of information, to be the nearly general belief of the whole people—a deduction which, however much of simplicity it may display, seems as reasonable and as logical as could possibly be expected. Instances are known, in confirmation of this belief, of individual Europeans, from their supposed resemblance to some deceased aboriginal, being called by his name, and kindred claimed with him by the relatives of the supposed original. The fact is made manifest, by this strange opinion, that the aborigines do believe in a future state of existence, as, if they had not previously held the belief that the souls of their relatives survived their corporeal decease, they could not arrive at the conclusion that they had transmigrated into the bodies of the white men. In further confirmation of their belief in a second existence, instances are known where indi-

viduals of the race have appealed to the names of their parents and other relatives when accused of a crime, to add force and effect to their protestations of innocence.

Idolatry—that manifestation of intellectual blindness which seems to belong to man in a secondary stage of civilization rather than in his primitive simplicity—has never been attributed to the New Hollander. Carved images, of a very rude description, and of an uncouth aspect, have been found among them, but that they were ever used otherwise than as baubles, or originated otherwise than as experiments in barbarous art, there is no reason whatever to believe.

We now arrive at the consideration of another important phase in the history and description of this people—namely, the gleamings of artistic skill amongst them, and their taste and capacity for works and performances of a purely intellectual description. From the aptitude or inaptitude which they will here be found to display, we will, as certainly as from any other criterion whatever, arrive at a just estimation of their mental powers, and the possibility of extending to them some, or all, of the blessings of civilization.

If the aboriginal race be in reality of a better stamp, they must have some other proof to bring forward besides mere personal qualifications—good countenance and figure. If they have no priests, they surely must have poets; if they acknowledge no chiefs, they certainly must have among them men

"wise in their generation," in whose counsel they place reliance, and to whose direction they yield obedience. If they have not among them men "cunning to work all works," they must have men who devote themselves to artistic and mechanical studies and labours. Barbarous and unsettled as is their mode of life, they must have some hours unoccupied by their usual necessary occupations, when all or some amongst them must seek employment in some work of mere pleasure. Such are a few questions which naturally suggest themselves in reference to the matter under consideration. Now, for many reasons already adduced, it could be deemed nothing extraordinary should the slightest trace of any such accomplishment as those referred to be found wanting. It must, therefore, be considered no small additional recommendation to the aboriginal if it can be shown that, not only has he given evidence of genius and talent, but of genius and talent existing in no inconsiderable degree. Here, again, it must be premised that those ever-recurring obstacles to investigation arising from the utter disregard heretofore manifested towards the aborigines and all that relates to them become formidable in the extreme. As, however, the object in view is not to analyze, but to paint, and bearing in mind the axiom that he is the best workman who quarrels least with his utensils, no alternative remains but to make the most of what light exists on the subject.

First, then, as to the poetry of the aborigines.

Testimony in confirmation of the existence of this faculty is yielded by almost every authority who has written or said a word on the subject of the tribes of New Holland. One fact alone is wanting to render the testimony conclusive, namely, a published translation of some of their effusions! The existence of a complete poem, possessed of a considerable amount of true poetical merits—descriptive, impassioned, and unconstrained — is mentioned by an undoubted authority, and is said to have been translated by a gentleman in the interior, from the rehearsal of some blacks in his neighbourhood, with whose language he was familiar. Lhotsky, in his comprehensive, though somewhat scanty, work on Australia, refers to a particular native song in terms of the highest eulogy, and bears testimony to the general powers of the aborigines for poetical exertion. Instances are also known of the talents of individual natives to improvise on any subject; and one is mentioned as being so far gifted in this respect that he would, undoubtedly, surpass any of the Italian improvisatori in his peculiar sphere. Many well-known traits of the aborigines likewise tend to the belief that metrical compositions are common amongst them, as, in their first encounter with civilized men, indulging, when terrified, in a low-toned, mysterious chant, intended, as generally supposed, to counteract impending evil.

The first buddings of the painter's skill amongst the aborigines next attract attention. That metrical composition should not be unknown is perhaps not so

wonderful, when it is considered that this method of giving vent to the workings of the mind and of the passions is that which barbarous nations are likely first to acquire, and with which few are unfamiliar. That, however, painting—the real art of portraiture, however rude—should exist, shows a systematic longing after the development of the sublime capabilities of humanity truly astonishing, and seems to contradict in the most ample manner the doctrine advanced by some, and certainly consistent with our highest teachings, that man in a primitive state of barbarism does not possess within himself the power of attaining the most elevated status of the human race.

On the northern coast of New Holland an island exists, joined to the mainland by a narrow strip of sandbank, traversable at low water, but covered at the flow of the tide. The island is principally composed of a peculiar description of rock, with a smooth, hard surface, but overlaid with a coat of soft substance, probably the result of atmospheric action. This rock is described by voyagers who have visited the island as being covered with delineations of every description of figure which could suggest itself to an aboriginal. The black man, fully equipped for battle or in the attitude of an orator; the corroboree, in its most striking features; the interior of the gunyah, or native hut, with its inmates; kangaroos, emus, and the lesser animals; birds and fishes; implements of war, ornaments, and domestic utensils—these, and a variety of similar figures, are here to be seen delineated

in a hundred different forms. Nor does this primitive gallery appear to be the result of some chance experiments ; several evidences exist in support of the supposition that the sable artists repaired thence periodically for the purpose of exercising their skill in imparting to the surface of the stone this mimicry of animation.

Instances are likewise numerous of individuals among the aborigines seeking to acquire the rudiments of the painter's art, by attempting, whenever paper and pencil were available, to copy pictures which they had seen, or sketch the objects with which they were most familiar—an exercise in which they are always described as exhibiting considerable aptitude. Indeed, their general powers of imitation, and their enlarged scope of comprehension, have been matters of the greatest surprise to all who have studied the habits of the native tribes of Australia ; while the facility with which individuals among them adapt themselves to civilized usages, and form a correct estimate of anything connected with European life, are facts unparalleled in the history of barbarians.

CHAPTER IV.

FACULTY OF OBSERVATION—INTUITION—STOICISM —RITES OF SEPULTURE, AND REVERENCE FOR THE DEAD.

THE faculties of observation and perception are, perhaps, the greatest endowments of the mind. Among civilized men whole nations are distinguished by the possession of these gifts, and on their exercise depends, more than on anything else whatever, the destiny of individuals. It is not alone, however, in investigating and comprehending cause and effect that the exercise of observation or perception consists; the simple fact of noting the existence of certain objects or phenomena is in itself an effort often deserving consideration and merit. No man, for instance, not born blind, has failed to see that beautiful flood of light in the firmament known as the Milky Way, but how many have lived and died so absorbed in their own immediate thoughts, and so prone to earth, that its existence could be scarcely said to come within the limits of their knowledge. Hence, among a primitive people, the close and exact observation of great facts and remarkable phenomena may be considered as great an accomplishment as would be the detailed investigation and description of them among enlightened men. Innumerable proofs exist to show that the Australian aboriginal is by no means deficient in this respect. That he is not indifferent to the

multitudinous and beautiful objects of the starry spheres may be inferred from the well-authenticated fact of his having distinguished from surrounding groups the constellation Gemini, and having conferred thereon an appellation of his own choosing—the Castor and Pollux of classic lore being by the New Hollander transformed into the Blackfellow and his Gin. Those masses of light in the heavens, long known as Magellan's Clouds, have likewise been noted by the aborigines, and their existence explained by them in their own peculiar style. The tradition is current among the tribes of the northern part of Australia that a solitary black, having strayed from his companions on a hunting excursion, lighted a fire in the night where he stopped ; that, having warmed himself with its heat, and the fuel being reduced to embers, he cast his eyes upwards, where he beheld distinctly above him the wonderful spectacle of the smoke of his fire changed into two cloudy oval masses, and standing immovable in the sky. Such is the aboriginal origin of Magellan's Clouds. Whether the tradition affords any explanation as to why and wherefore the smoke performed such an extraordinary feat, or why the smoke of the fire lighted by the aforesaid benighted individual should accomplish such an eccentricity, any more than the smoke of any other fire, has not been ascertained. That such a tradition, however, should obtain among the aborigines, and be received by them with some credulity, is by no means improbable or unnatural, when it is considered that

traditions and fables not a whit more reasonable, and not half so logical, are common in the most civilized nations. Eclipses are among the phenomena which the aboriginals regard with peculiar interest and attention, such occurrences being always looked upon as the forerunners of calamity. And, strange to say, an eclipse of the moon is looked upon as a much more important and serious matter than an eclipse of the sun. Whenever the former luminary becomes obscured by an interposition of our globe the aborigines manifest the utmost alarm and concern; they say that she is assailed by her enemies, and with loud clamours and violent gesticulations, discharge arrows, spears, and other missiles towards her supposed tormentors, which they continue to do till the eclipse has terminated. This and many other reasons tend to the conclusion that the orb of night is regarded with greater veneration by the blacks than the luminary of the day. For this, however, some very probable reasons can be adduced. By the light of the moon their fishing expeditions are carried out; by the same light they hunt the animals on which they chiefly depend for sustenance, and many of these latter are only to be procured during the hours of night. Thus the moon is their more immediate benefactress, although her benefactions fall far short of those conferred by the more ardent source of light; and acting in accordance with the maxim that the best gift is best remembered, the aborigines regard the former with the greater amount of veneration.

Intuition, or the power of anticipating thought, and accomplishing feats to the mind of civilized man impossible without the aid of science, appears to be a gift of the blacks of Australia in common with other savage tribes. The Indians of North America are said to be capable, by the assistance of some unexplained agency, of navigating the vast lakes of that continent with a precision not to be surpassed where the compass and all the other scientific apparatus of modern navigation are rendered available —reaching in their canoes a destined point on the opposite shores, although for days out of sight of any land. Instances of the display of this extraordinary sagacity fully as striking are recorded by those who have had experience of the powers of the aborigines of New Holland. A native of the Swan River district, who accompanied Captain Stokes on one of his voyages of discovery, was at all times capable of indicating the direction of certain ports when no land was visible, and when neither the sun nor the stars were to be seen to afford him any assistance. The same aboriginal could, at the termination of a voyage, delineate the course the ship had pursued during a cruise of weeks, with a precision which astonished the ablest seaman. It is, however, highly probable that the solution of the problem would be found within the sphere of natural causes ; but that the process of observation by which the savage is enabled to display this power is so intricate and so minute as to render the term "intuition" not altogether inapplicable, would doubtless be the

result of a close investigation of the subject. The Australian aboriginal will detect at once the spot under which a human body lies buried, or will indicate the point in a river or a creek where it has sunk. This, on first view, would be considered a species of second sight, whereas it is merely the result of an observation of minute appearances and indications. In the former case, certain peculiarities in the insects on the surface show to the eye of the black that mortality moulders beneath; in the latter case, appearances equally trifling afford the necessary token. So, likewise in their navigation, aids and indications unknown to civilized man, because unnecessary, supply the place of science, and in some instances put to the blush the discoveries and improvements of ages.

A certain stoicism of demeanour is likewise a characteristic of the aborigines of New Holland, in common with some other primitive tribes. This is principally evinced in the indifference with which they regard, on first view, the wonders of civilization—its ships, warlike implements, vehicles, horses, and various other appurtenances. An extraordinary instance of this stoic indifference is on record. A ship having touched at a part of the coast where it was highly improbable that a European vessel had ever called before, a boat party landed for the purpose of procuring wood and making observations on the nature of the country. When the party landed a solitary aboriginal approached them in the most confident

manner, and entered into communication with them through the medium of signs, without evincing the least appearance of embarrassment or dread. On the boat afterwards leaving the shore to return to the ship he turned his face homewards, and disappeared in the bush without once looking back at what must have been to him a new and extraordinary spectacle. An illustration of their indifference is also afforded by the carelessness they evince on first coming in contact with those huge animals which are ever adjuncts to European society—horses, cattle, &c. The American Indians for a long time entertained the belief that the horses of the Europeans were beasts of prey, used in warfare to destroy and devour the enemy, while some looked upon the horse and rider as identical ; hence, in the early contests between the first colonists and the aborigines, one horseman has been known to put to flight hundreds of the latter. No such feelings of surprise or fear are betrayed by the New Hollander in his first intercourse with Europeans and their accompanying agencies. Instances are numerous where the aborigines in the most remote parts of the interior, where white man never before trod, or was never mentioned, have become at once the auxiliaries of explorers, approaching and handling their beasts of burden as though they had been all their days accustomed to such brutes. Nor can this be ascribed to any other cause than a quickness of perception by which they at once perceive the use and application of everything they behold, combined with a certain

savage dignity which prevents them from expressing wonder or surprise at what are the mere subserving agencies of men.

The rite of sepulture is perhaps among the most important distinguishing indices of a people ; the mode of its performance, and its accompanying ceremonies, are therefore deserving of attention in considering the peculiarities and customs of a race of men. Among the New Holland tribes the rite appears to vary considerably in different districts, and is held in various degrees of importance by various tribes. In some places the body is not buried in the earth, but placed on a raised hurdle, wrapped in coverings of bark and twigs. In other districts it is buried in the usual manner, the grave being marked by a raised mound, stakes being sometimes driven into the earth at the four corners. They do not appear to have any regular cemeteries, and four or five graves is the greatest number which has been observed in any locality. But although in general the rites of burial are not accompanied by ostentation, and the place of interment unmarked by any lasting memorial, instances there are where, in imitation of civilized people, the aborigines have raised laboured and substantial monuments to perpetuate the memory of some great or favourite individual. The most important of these sepulchral monuments which has heretofore been discovered is described as a large mound of earth, formed in the shape of a dome, and constructed with evident design and considerable

skill and neatness, considering the rude implements available for the work. The hollow whence the earth was taken is described as forming a well-defined circle round the tomb. On digging into this latter it was found to cover a vault, its weight being sustained by a scaffolding of timbers placed transversely over the mouth of the grave. Within the vault lay the remains of the deceased with his face towards the east, encased in swathings composed of grass, bark, and other similar material. The most striking feature, however, in connection with the object was the elaborate carvings discovered on some of the trees immediately surrounding the spot, the skill and labour exercised on which greatly astonished the beholders. To this custom of burying the dead with the face towards the east, which prevails in some degree among the blacks, as well as to that of circumcision, practised by some tribes on the northern coasts, may be attributed the hypothesis of the Hebrew origin of the New Hollander. Some writers have gone so far as to state that they have observed among the aborigines individuals with features strongly marked by those peculiarities characteristic of the chosen people! A strange and ludicrous custom is mentioned as being practised at interments by the blacks of the eastern coast, which consists in carrying the body of the deceased by circuitous routes for several miles round the grave—a wise precaution, said to be intended to thwart the dead should he ever design to fright the living by "revisiting the glimpses of the moon" in

ghostly guise! From this it is apparent that ghosts and goblins, and the other numerous airy denizens with which the imagination has peopled earth and air in European countries, have found a habitation and a name in the Australian wilderness. In some parts the relations of the deceased pretend to receive mysterious communications from him previous to interment.

Extreme reverence for the memory of the dead is a remarkable principle among the doctrines of the aborigines. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* is the maxim inculcated by an enlightened benevolence among civilized men, and very generally acted upon. The Australian aborigine goes further, and not only proclaims that no evil shall be spoken of the dead, but that the silence of the tomb shall in no wise be broken by the living. This rule is carried out to the letter, and with the utmost stringency. Thus, if an individual bear the same name as the deceased, he is obliged to adopt some other for a certain period, so that even the name of the dead may not be spoken; and if a deceased person be inquired after by some one ignorant of his demise, he will not be answered otherwise than by the downcast looks and marked silence of those whom he questions.

CHAPTER V.

LANGUAGE—MUSIC—MODE OF WARFARE—HUNTING —HUNTING GROUNDS—MODE OF PUNISHMENT.

THERE is no aboriginal language with which we are at the present day acquainted equal in many respects to the tongue which made vocal the forests and plains of Australia ere the arrival of the white man. Admitting the correctness of the theory which supposes the original inhabitants of the Australian territory and the coloured tribes of the South Sea Islands and America to be of a common stock, originally inhabiting the southern shores of Asia, it is certain that their primitive language did not improve in proportion as it diverged from its source. The native language of New Zealand is very defective in point of euphony, its notes falling on the ear like the sound of a rapid current passing over rough rocks, or the pattering of a hail-storm on a shingled roof. The tongue of the Sandwich Islands and the other groups of the South Seas is said to bear a strong affinity to that of New Zealand. On the continent of America the language is found to have recovered in some degree from the shock which it would seem to have experienced in the course of its travels, and again partakes of an Oriental tint, the highly figurative and

romantic stamp of the dialects of the North American Indians forming one of the most interesting traits of their history and character.

In fulness of tone, variety of sound, and easy flow of expression, the language of the Australian tribes is, however, not to be surpassed. In proof of this it is only necessary to refer to the aboriginal names of the various localities throughout the colonies, some of which have now become familiar in Europe and America. On the other hand we are not without evidence that, for capability of expression and descriptive scope, some of the New Holland dialects by no means fall short of even the picturesque speech of the red huntsman of the North American prairies.

The soothing powers of the musical art are not altogether unknown among the aborigines. In their corroborees they sing and beat time with sticks, and their dance is performed to a rude species of music—"vocal and instrumental." Their musical instruments are few, two sorts being all that have been discovered. One of these is a species of kettledrum, formed of kangaroo skin and a piece of hollow timber, the former drawn tightly over the latter and secured at the sides, something after the fashion of the instrument in use among Europeans. The other is a species of pipe, made of bamboo, about three feet in length. The manner of sounding this instrument is a novelty in the musical world, as it is the only instrument known which is operated on by the nasal organ. Such is the method of sounding it as practised by these

sable musicians, who succeed in producing thereby a droning noise, not unlike the tones of the bag-pipes.

The manner of conducting their warfare is like everything else connected with them—novel. The hostility of the tribes to each other seems to be almost unremitting, and their encounters in their primitive state frequent. As, however, very few incentives to inveterate warfare are to be found amongst them, so they seem to have come to a mutual understanding that their struggles, however frequent, shall be as harmless as possible. Their encounters are said, in general, to follow from circumstances attending a death or marriage in the tribes. In the former case the contest results from a superstition among them that if a man dies before he has attained an old age, his death is the result of witchcraft, practised on the victim by some one of another tribe. After death an old man, who acts in the multiplex capacity of doctor, priest, magician, and councillor, pretends to interrogate the corpse as to who caused death; an answer is feigned to be received. The guilty party is named, who never fails to be some individual against whom the "doctor," or one of his friends, has a grudge. Death is immediately denounced against the alleged dealer of witchcraft, and a war follows to carry the sentence into effect. War generally succeeds marriages, owing to the custom which very generally prevails of carrying off wives by force from among the females

of another tribe. In this latter case hostilities are commenced to retaliate the aggression.

When from either of the above causes, or from any other reason, war has been declared, preparations are commenced and carried on with activity for some time previous to an encounter. Old weapons are collected and repaired, new ones formed, and all the appliances of warfare brought into requisition. Treachery appears never to be resorted to by these sable belligerents in their contests among themselves. In general the hostile tribes encamp opposite each other the night previous to an engagement, and it not infrequently happens that the women and children of a tribe assemble within sight of the enemy long previous to the arrival of the warriors. The march of the latter on such occasions is sometimes conducted with great military regularity, and with some strange motions, the object of which is, no doubt, to create a certain warlike ardour in the combatants. Their progress to the place of rendezvous is thus described:— After performing a dance and a song in a body, the smeared and armed heroes start off at a race in a regular line, one after the other, for a distance of about 150 yards, when they again draw up in a well-ordered and compact phalanx, and repeat, with increased fire and energy, the dance and song. These proceedings they continue to repeat till they arrive at the destined ground.

The battle which follows is more or less sanguinary according to the temper of the combatants,

or the cause of the encounter. In general, however, the casualties are limited to a few broken heads, and, perhaps, a spear wound or two; but sometimes three or four—seldom a greater number—of the fighting men "sleep the sleep of death" on the field of battle. The fight is generally commenced by a single combat, an individual stepping forward from each of the hostile ranks, one hurling a spear, which the other dexterously wards off with a small shield, or, failing to do so, receives it in some part of his person. Several spears are thus discharged by either party, when, in the event of none taking effect, the combatants approach, and the one submitting his head to the other, voluntarily receives a blow from the waddy of his antagonist, an operation by which, no doubt, a bump is developed never dreamt of in the philosophy of either Gall or Spurzheim. The other then submits his cranium and receives back the compliment, after which both retire, mutually satisfied, if not very well pleased, with the result of their interview. This ludicrous species of warfare is continued until all parties deem that they have had enough, and terminate the battle, or, on the other hand, the passions of the spectators becoming excited by the scenes above described, as well as by the songs and harangues of the older portion of the women, some of whom keep up a continuous chorus, a general engagement ensues, in which spears, boomerangs, waddies, and tomahawks are sometimes used with deadly effect. After the battle the conquered force are always

allowed to depart without molestation, if so disposed, but it not infrequently happens that both parties associate together and enjoy a feast and a corroboree previous to their final separation.

The mode in which the blacks catch the kangaroo, the principal animal on which they depend for subsistence, is simple but ingenious. They dig holes in the plains, so deep that a man would be concealed in one of them up to the shoulders; across the openings of these they place thin saplings, so arranged, however, that they would afford but little support to a weighty body placed on them. These they cover with brambles, grass, and other material, so as to render the spot as nearly as possible similar to the surrounding ground. Into these traps the unsuspecting kangaroos tumble through the frail hurdle and become an easy prey to the cunning huntsman. It is more than probable that a bait of some description is placed near the concealed opening to entice the animal to its doom, or that some other stratagem besides the mere forming of the trap is resorted to, as the game must be very plentiful indeed to render it probable that any of them would fall into such a simple snare except by the merest chance.

This, however, is not the only means used to destroy this chief of the animal tribes of the Australian forest. The spear is his most inveterate and most destructive enemy, ever ready in the hand of the aboriginal to pounce upon him at each available opportunity.

Hunting expeditions are also undertaken for the purpose of securing supplies of this animal. When a scrub or other locality is known to contain numbers of this species a circle is formed by the aborigines around the spot, the huntsmen being suitably armed and equipped for the occasion ; the bush which is thought to conceal the game is then traversed by other blacks, who, with loud shouts and by beating the scrub, drive out the kangaroos, which soon fall beneath the spears, waddies, and tomahawks of those without. Sometimes, also, a shrubbery, supposed to shelter the species, is set fire to for the purpose of driving them into the clutches of their pursuers. It is but justice to the aborigines, however, to state that, while they thus unrelentingly destroy these animals when pressed by hunger, they are not altogether unmindful of their wants and necessities. The burning of the grass, a result so frequently observed on the plains of the interior, is said to be the work of the aborigines, in order that a new and more luxuriant growth may spring up for the use of the kangaroos.

The wild turkey, a bird of very large size, the flesh of which is said to be extremely rich, is among the principal creatures on which the aboriginal depends for his stock of food. This turkey, or bustard, is said to be pretty abundant in some parts of the far interior, but is described as being remarkably shy of man. It is only to be shot at a long range, and then with great difficulty, as at the slightest indication of the presence of a human being it takes to the dense

underwood and is lost to view. Europeans generally succeed in getting within shooting distance by concealing themselves at the side of a horse. One of the methods adopted by the blacks for ensnaring this bird is the following :—The sportsman, when he comes in view of a covey of the game, procures a large spreading bramble, sufficient, when in a crouching position, to conceal his form. To this he attaches, by a string, a small bird, which he has at hand for the purpose. Concealing himself behind the foliage he then crawls deliberately and slowly in the direction of his object. The bird, which has been attached to the bramble, being kept towards the turkeys, its fluttering soon attracts the attention of the latter ; they proceed to examine the strange object, at which they soon begin to peck. In the meantime the black, behind his leafy screen, prepares his snare, a sort of lasso, which he throws over the neck of his game, one by one, until all are entrapped.

It is a fact not generally known that among the aborigines of this territory, previous to the encroachments of the white man—and at the present day in the remote parts of the country—very exact divisions of territory among the various tribes prevailed. Yet such is the fact. In establishing these territorial divisions, moreover, the aborigines display a sense of equality and fair play which might sometimes be very well copied by more scientific surveyors and more enlightened law-makers. Thus, it is an established fact that wherever a lake of importance existed, the

lands were so divided that a certain portion of water frontage was allotted to all the tribes in the district. In like manner the rivers were as far as possible common property.

The extent of the districts into which the country was divided was in general from twenty to thirty square miles, and their occupiers at all times evinced a great deal of jealousy at any violation by the neighbouring tribes of these their hunting-grounds. The passing of a boundary line by the blacks of another territory was considered as an act of hostility against the denizens of the invaded grounds, and wars were frequently the sequence of such transgressions. When the circumstances are considered, and when, from the nature of the country, it is reflected how important it was to the original inhabitants to preserve inviolate their domains, with the animated creatures which formed their greatest wealth, and almost their only resource for a supply of the necessaries of life, it is not to be wondered at that, when driven altogether from their possessions by the advance of the Europeans, they have sometimes resorted to acts of retaliation and reprisal.

The mode of punishment common among the aboriginals for the more grave offences is one which is not without a parallel in some shape among civilized nations. A certain number of spears are ordered to be cast at the criminal, who stands at a stated distance, armed with a small shield, called an elaman. With this he is allowed to ward off the spears if he can ; if

he be not sufficiently dexterous or skilful he receives them in his body, and perhaps falls a victim to the wounds which they inflict. Very often the offender escapes altogether unhurt, owing to his expert management of the shield. A practice bearing some analogy to this is said to prevail in some countries of the East, where criminals are sentenced to swim across a neck of the sea known to abound in sharks, to whose ravenous propensities they are thus almost to a certainty sacrificed.

CHAPTER VI.

CEREMONY OF INITIATION—HALF-CASTE CHILDREN —BELIEF IN SPIRITS—A NEW SPECIES OF FOOD—CORROBOREE—THE "KRADGA KIBBA."

ONE of the most important ceremonies among the aborigines is the installation of a young man among the warriors of the tribe. The ceremony takes place when the youth has attained a certain age, and is at once a form and a test. On the day appointed for the performance all the men of the tribe assemble at a fixed place, and the "doctor" of the tribe having marked out a circle of considerable extent, the artists proceed to form representations of animals, and other figures, on the soil or sand within the circle. With these the entire place is covered, with the exception of a small spot in the centre, and an air of mystery having been thus imparted to the scene, the ceremony commences in the ring, the spectators being ranged round the circle. The operation of knocking out one of the front teeth of the young man is then performed by the doctor, and on the fortitude which the former displays under the operation depends the estimation in which he is hereafter to be held. He is then presented with the opossum belt, after which he is allowed to marry and join in the conclaves, councils, and expeditions of the tribe, being previous to this ceremony

only permitted to associate with the women and children. No woman is permitted to be present at or to witness this ceremony, which generally takes place in a sequestered spot, at a distance from the camp ; and should any female be known to have furtively witnessed the scene she would be liable to pay the penalty of her forbidden curiosity by death.

Numerous half-caste children of the female sex are to be observed among the aborigines, while, on the contrary, a half-caste boy is scarcely ever seen. The reason of this is said to be that the latter is always destroyed when born, the former being spared. The cause alleged for this barbarous practice is that the male children, if permitted to grow to manhood, would become too wise, and would thereby exercise an undue influence among their compeers. Practices similar to this, and from like motives, are common among other barbarous nations. It is said that negroes returning to their native country after a residence in any of the civilized nations are sometimes killed at the instigation of the heathen priests, who dread lest the influence and example of the new comer might, by destroying the credulity of their followers, sap the foundations of their dignity and power.

A great variety of circumstances tend to show beyond question that the aborigines are believers in spirits. They imagine that the air is peopled during the night by the shades of those who have "shuffled off the mortal coil," and it is said that they never fight during the night time, believing that human strife at

such hours would be offensive or injurious to the airy beings. This belief may also, in some measure, account for the unwillingness of the blacks to converse about deceased persons or even mention their names.

A somewhat extraordinary practice is mentioned in connection with the blacks of the northern coasts. This is nothing less than the application of glass to the novel purpose of food. When a piece of that substance came by any means into their possession, it was broken into a number of small particles and distributed around. The sharp corners being then carefully rubbed smooth the pieces were swallowed, the recipients of these singular pills at the same time looking up at the sky, clapping their hands on their breasts, and, by sundry exclamations and gestures, expressing the pleasure they felt. What may be the real origin or the object of this strange custom it is difficult to say. As, however, it will be seen hereafter that the quartz crystal, which has latterly been found so abundantly in connection with the gold matrix, was formerly used for medicinal, or rather magical, purposes among the aborigines, it is more than probable that some extraordinary curative or talismanic properties were attributed by them to all substances of a crystallized nature and appearance.

As the corroboree appears to be the great festival among the New Hollanders, an account of it may be deserving of particular attention. Under this term may be comprised all the festivity and fun of which the aboriginal is cognizant, or in which he indulges.

It is at once his Bacchanal, Cyprian and Olympian games. Here his songs and orations are recited, his musical performances are accomplished, his dances performed, and his amours and courtship indulged. The corroboree usually takes place as the sequel to a battle, on the occasion of a friendly meeting or consultation between two or more tribes, at the initiation of a young man of more than ordinary note, or on any other occasion when the temper of the actors in such scenes induces them to give vent to their disposition to frolic and excitement in one of those games. Night is generally selected as the time for these performances, and the effect of such scenes by moonlight, or by the glare of bush fires, is said to be striking in the extreme. Eighty or a hundred men ranged in a line, with or without clubs, performing a measured dance, in which the chief motion consists of contortions and movements of the legs, accompanied by a species of song, and the sound of the different rude instruments known to the aborigines, the women being on such occasions the instrumental performers, as well as sustaining the chief burden of the vocal music: such are the chief features of the scene. This, however, is not the whole of the corroboree. Various minor acts succeed, in which both men and women take part, and the whole is continued till the performers become completely intoxicated with the excess of delight and excitement. At the present day, and within the precincts of the settled parts of the country, these *fêtes* are much disused among the

aborigines, or, at least, much perverted. Formerly they were resorted to by the blacks in order to diversify the nature of their occupations of hunting and fishing, and, no doubt, added materials to their scanty stock of enjoyment. Now they are in general the scenes of drunken and brutal broils, for the most part got up by the whites in the interior for the purpose of gratifying a corrupt curiosity to witness the antics of the aborigines when intoxicated. In these scenes we see exemplified the degradation to which humanity, even in its lowest form, may be reduced by the devices of men, when, from some cause or other, the hellish tendencies of the human heart and head conspire for such a purpose. Thus, the brutalized shepherd or bullock driver of the interior affords to the aboriginal a plentiful supply of rum for the purpose of amusing himself, and being gratified by the fact that some other being is more depraved and debased than himself, by which he only copies in a manner some of the civilized and polished governments of Europe of former and present times, who, for the purpose of degrading men and nations, shut up the roads of knowledge and civilization to a large section of the human family, in order that they might thereby be rendered the helpless victims of tyranny and plunder.

To return. The "Kṛadga Kibba," or "doctor-stone," as the words signify, is a talisman, used by those among the aborigines who usually perform the functions of physicians, for the purpose of effecting

cures. It consists of a piece of crystallized quartz; it is in general carefully preserved in wrappings of skin, and has been known to be treasured with so much anxiety by its owner that it was a work of some considerable time to unravel the network and coverings in which it was preserved. These precious objects were in general valued according to their size, and were supposed by the blacks to possess, among other extraordinary properties, the power of causing the death of any one at whom they were thrown by the "Kradga." No woman was permitted to see them, and they were said by the aborigines to cause the immediate death of any female who broke through the prohibition. The manner of using the "Kradga Kibba" for the cure of a spear wound received in battle is thus described:—The wounded man being removed after nightfall to a distance from the camp, the doctor proceeded to suck the wound, a process by which all dirt and other matter tending to produce inflammation were removed; the stone was then placed in the mouth of the doctor and the spittle being ejected on the ground, was stamped into the soil, with sundry incantations and gestures. The stone was in general made use of at night, at which time it was said to be most efficacious. The doctors always alleged that it was manufactured by themselves, sedulously concealing from their patients the fact that it was a natural production; and, in addition to its healing virtues, it was said to be a sure protection from the mischiefs of the evil spirit.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL COUNCILS — MOURNING — ORNAMENTED OPOSSUM CLOAKS—FERRY-BOATS—JUVENILE EXERCISES— CULINARY PROCESS.

LIKE civilized nations, the tribes of Australia have their great councils, alliances, and international laws. One of their diets, held at the camp of a tribe in the neighbourhood of Port Macquarie, is described as lasting for several days. The tribe on whose territory the assemblage took place appear to have been looked upon, for some cause or other, as possessing merit and wisdom in more than an ordinary degree, and hence, it is said, that on all occasions of emergency or difficulty the surrounding tribes repaired to them for counsel and judgment. They seem to have been the Levites of the tribes. The objects for which those general councils were assembled were, for the most part, the settlement of disputed boundaries and the undertaking of warlike expeditions. Sometimes, however, delegates from various tribes have assembled on occasions of less import, as, for instance, to assist in a hunting expedition or join in some ceremony or game. Seasons of more than ordinary plenty, when the plains abounded more than usual in game or the rivers in fish, were in general favourite periods for holding these gatherings, from which it is to be inferred that they were as often the result of a rude

hospitality and a social disposition as of any more serious and important cause.

Savage, or semi-barbarous nations, are remarkable for nothing more than their displays of grief on the death of relatives and friends. Whether in the self-immolation of the wife of the deceased Hindoo, the sacrifice of numerous human victims on the death of a chief or person of distinction among the aboriginal inhabitants of Peru, or the ostentatious obsequies of the Patagonians, who construct tents for the reception of the remains of their dead, which they surround with the skeletons of those animals which were their companions in life, this peculiar trait of barbarism everywhere becomes visible. The New Hollanders likewise put themselves into mourning for deceased relatives and friends during a certain period. The practice seems, however, to be, for the most part, confined to the females, and consists in painting the person with pipeclay and other whitish substances, and ornamenting the hair with bits of whitened reed. Thus the colour of the "trappings and the suits of woe" of the aboriginal is the reverse of that in use among more civilized mourners.

The ornamental articles, whether of dress or otherwise, in use among the blacks of New Holland are, as may well be imagined, judging by the comparatively miserable condition in which they are known to exist, few and simple. The chief ornament worn on the person consists of a piece of mat, worn in the manner of a fillet across the forehead. This is

called a "ballombime," and is made of various materials, but chiefly of threads formed from the tendons of the tail of the kangaroo and the legs of the emu; they are worked by the women, and are in general, for the sake of greater effect, painted with red ochre, or some other colouring substance; the "ballombime" is only worn by the men. Necklaces are the chief ornaments of the females. These are made of small pieces of a very thin reed, the particles, which are strung with the fibres of the currajong tree, or strings formed of similar material, being about the size of those used in the formation of ordinary necklaces; they are for the most part painted yellow, and are worn in numerous folds. The women likewise use the teeth of the kangaroo for ornamental purposes, attaching them to the ends of their ringlets, of which some of them possess a luxuriant and silky crop, and of which, in common with the males, they are very careful and very vain, using ointments of opossum fat and other such substances to preserve its smoothness and gloss.

The opossum cloak formed the chief if not the only article of dress worn by the aboriginal in his primitive state. It was at once his coat, cloak, and blanket—his garment by day and his coverlet by night; and so well was it adapted for affording comfort and protection that to the present day the opossum cloak is sought after with considerable eagerness by the colonists for similar purposes to those to which they were applied by the original proprietors. Happy does

the bush traveller deem himself who at night can envelope his body in the downy folds of such a covering, whose duplicate fold of fur and hide defies alike the keenest blast and the most pinching frost. This excellent and valuable article, as the name implies, is formed in general of the skin of the opossum. Although the skin of this little animal is that most generally used, it is not the only one used in the manufacture, the skin of the wallaby and other animals being sometimes applied to the purpose of forming those cloaks. The process of manufacture is thus described :—The skin is in the first instance scraped with a shell or sharp-edged stone until it is reduced to the requisite consistence, after which it is extended on pegs driven in the ground, and exposed to the sun till quite dry ; it is then fit for use. The sewing is performed by the women, who make use of the tendons of the kangaroo and emu as thread, and a fish-bone supplies the place of a needle. This latter process exhibits a skill and neatness in the highest degree extraordinary, when the manner of the appliances available for the performance of the work is taken into consideration, so that one of these cloaks will wear for an incredible length of time. Sometimes they are ornamented on the inner or smooth side by a species of tattooing or figuring, more or less elaborate according to the taste or skill of the owner. The manner of wearing the opossum cloak is somewhat characteristic. A string or thong is run through the folds when doubled up, and being thus thrown on the

left shoulder, it is fastened by the thong under the right arm, leaving the right arm and shoulder free and exposed. The object of this manner of dressing is apparent. The aboriginal, in his primitive state, is never unarmed, either by spear, waddy, or tomahawk, ready for use at all times either for attack or defence, so that it is indispensable that his right arm should always be untrammelled.

Necessity, which, as the old school-book maxim has it, is the mother of all invention, has in no instance excited the inventive faculties of the aboriginal to a greater extent than in suggesting a method by which to cross the rivers and watercourses which intersect the country, and which at certain intervals it is a matter of no small difficulty to transmigrate. Whenever such a feat is to be accomplished two or three blacks set about "barking" the first tree of whose magnitude and quality they approve, an operation which, from their practice in this species of exercise, is soon accomplished. With the sheet of bark thus stripped the boat or punt is formed by which the other side of the river is to be attained. The curve which the bark will naturally retain will prevent the water from entering at the sides, and a quantity of malleable pipe-clay, or other such substance, everywhere available, will prevent the water from obtaining ingress at the ends. A couple of saplings will supply the place of paddles, and on this simple ferry the individuals or the entire tribes, as the case may be, are transported across the impeding waters.

It appears that at a very early age the aborigines inure their children to those exercises which in after years form their chief employment, and are so necessary to their very existence. No sooner have the boys attained sufficient strength to run about than they are taught to hurl mimic spears and boomerangs, and make use of all the other weapons in use among their tribe, for which purpose they are provided with implements adapted to their years and powers. For the purpose of acquiring the art of throwing the spear with precision and effect, they are provided with imitations of that weapon formed of small reeds, and pointed with pieces of hard wood. A target is formed of a piece of bark formed into a circular shape, and about a foot in diameter. This is rolled backwards and forwards on the ground by two boys at a time, at certain points for the purpose, while a third hurls his light spears at the target while in motion. The object of this style of practice is self-evident. The spear is the chief weapon used not only in hunting but even in fishing, and is consequently always directed against objects moving with more or less velocity. It is therefore of consequence that the learner should accustom himself to take aim, not at a stationary mark, which in real practice he will seldom be required to do, but at some object which moves before his sight.

The culinary process, as practised among the aborigines, possesses some striking peculiarities. Kangaroo and some other of the larger birds and

animals are said to be sometimes prepared by the same method employed in New Zealand and the South Sea Islands, and so familiar to every reader of history of these islands and their inhabitants. This consists in steaming the meat in an oven formed in the ground of small flat stones. A fire is first lighted in the oven, which is burned until the flags become heated to the highest degree. The fire being then removed, the meat is placed in the oven, and covered over with layers of leaves, grass, and clay, and in a short time may be removed perfectly baked. This method of cooking is said by some who have partaken of repasts so prepared to excel any other in many respects. In general, however, the pressing hunger of the Australian aboriginal does not permit him to resort to such a slow and methodical mode of preparing his food. The more usual plan is, after returning from the hunt, to skin the animal or bird at once, which operation they perform with great adroitness, and then cast the animal whole on the fire, from which it is removed when about half broiled for the purpose of being devoured. The animal is then torn in pieces by the hands of him who acts as carver for the occasion, or, if artificial means be required for the purpose of dismembering the joints, a tomahawk is used as a chopper. On these occasions the want of anything like politeness on the part of the blacks in their intercourse with each other is sometimes strongly exemplified, the food being sometimes cast on the ground, or thrown about

in the most indiscriminate manner, by him who divides. If a white man be present, however, it is said they will evince the greatest hospitality and politeness, offering him the choicest morsels before they serve themselves. All accounts agree in stating that animal food is always eaten by the aborigines in a half-cooked state; the only reason which can be adduced for this strange habit is to be gathered from the answer of an aboriginal when asked the cause of his not leaving an opossum longer in the fire, viz., that when roasted too much it became "only like a waddy."

CHAPTER VIII.

BELIEF IN THE METEMPSYCHOSIS — ABORIGINAL WOMEN—POWERS OF MIMICRY—A "BARBAROUS" PRACTICE—TATTOOING—MODES OF FISHING—LEX TALIONIS.

It has already been shown that the aboriginals entertain a belief that the souls of their deceased relatives pass into the bodies of other human beings, the white population, according to their ideas, being no other than the regenerated tribes of their own race which have passed away during the course of bygone ages. Their belief in the transmigration of souls, however, goes much further than this. In the consideration of this point we will find a still further proof in support of the hypothesis of the Oriental origin of the race. Like the followers of the Brahmins, they believe that the soul passes into the inferior animals—birds, beasts, and fishes. The existence of this belief is fully borne out by several circumstances which have come under the observation of Europeans at different times. A traveller being once about to shoot at an animal of a small species was deterred from his purpose by a black, who called out that he must not shoot, because, as he said, the intended victim was "him brother." Another anecdote which illustrates the prevalence of this belief in transmigration partakes, in the highest degree, of a romantic

character. A person being on one occasion cruising along the coast in a boat, the crew of which consisted of aboriginal natives, fired on a shoal of porpoises which made their appearance, and wounded one of them. The blacks had in vain used their utmost persuasion to dissuade him from his purpose of firing, and when they saw the result were in the highest degree concerned. On coming on shore they informed the tribe of what had happened, who immediately gave vent to their sorrow for what they seemed to regard as a great calamity, in loud outcries, the women weeping and uttering their grief in loud lamentations. Subsequently the individual who was the prime cause of all the commotion ascertained that the blacks regarded the porpoises as the former chiefs of their own and the neighbouring tribes, who, in their metamorphosed condition, still exercised a watchful care over the interests of their people by driving the fish on shore in times of scarcity—sometimes, during periods of more than ordinary want, sending carcases of whales to the relief of their hungering friends.

What has heretofore been said in reference to the aborigines relates principally to the male portion of the race—their habits, arts, and dispositions. It may therefore be desirable to devote a little space to the exclusive consideration of the principal characteristics by which the other sex is distinguished. Without such a review the picture which it is proposed to exhibit would, in fact, be incomplete. Here we will

find those feminine characteristics which excited the admiration and called forth the praise of Mungo Park, when journeying among the African tribes, reflected in the strongest light amongst a people if possible more barbarous and certainly more miserable than the ebon children of the Ethiopian desert. The far-famed traveller says, referring to the treatment which he experienced during his sojournings among the African tribes :—

"To a woman I never addressed myself in the language of decency and friendship without receiving a decent and friendly answer. If I was hungry or thirsty, wet or sick, they did not hesitate, like men, to perform a generous action. In so free and kind a manner did they contribute to my relief that if I was dry I drank the sweetest draught, and if hungry I ate the coarsest morsel, with the sweetest relish."

The picture here drawn of the African women might very well be applied to the females of the New Holland tribes, according to the accounts of nearly every one who has travelled amongst them while still enjoying their primeval simplicity, ere yet the corrupting influences which ever accompany civilized society had been brought to bear in lessening their simple dignity. The aboriginal females are described by all travellers as exhibiting, when viewed in favourable circumstances, the virtues of modesty and bashfulness in the highest degree, combined with a kindliness of disposition and a natural politeness of manners not to be surpassed. These characteristics are displayed more strikingly in the younger women ; they appear to diminish as they

grow older—the natural result, no doubt, of the hardships they are made to endure, and the ill-usage to which they are frequently subjected. A circumstance once came under the observation of the writer which, however trifling in itself, will tend to illustrate the suavity of character alluded to. One of those groups of aborigines which were so frequently to be met through the city some few years ago had assembled at the corner of one of the streets. Among the number were several women and children; one of the latter, a youngster some seven or eight years of age, was engaged in eating a half-loaf of bread, the gift, no doubt, of some benevolent housewife in the neighbourhood, while another juvenile, of about the same age, regarded the loaf and the eater with the most wistful eagerness. Presently, the latter accidentally letting his treasure fall on the ground, the former, with the speed of thought, picked it up and ran away, eating as he went. The mother of the delinquent, whose attention was attracted by the occurrence, at once gave chase, and overtaking the runaway, returned the prize to the lawful owner. The mother of the latter, in turn, considerately taking into account the probable hunger of the other child divided the bread in halves between the two boys. A remarkable instance of the fidelity of the native women is related as having been displayed in the earlier days of colonial history. A young aboriginal woman had become attached to a prisoner of the Crown assigned on a station in the interior.

The character of the latter appears to have been violent and bad in the extreme, and it is said that he often vented his ill-humour in the cruelty which he inflicted on his sable leman. In the course of time, the former, flying from the consequences of some felonious act, was necessitated to take to the bush, where he led that precarious and perilous existence inseparable from the mode of life which he had adopted. It was now that the fidelity of the aboriginal female was put to the test. Notwithstanding that he had uniformly ill-treated, and had on several occasions brutally assaulted her ; notwithstanding that he was now placed in such a position that she had nothing further to expect from him, she did not for a moment evince the slightest inclination to desert him. On the contrary, she renewed her assiduity in ministering to his wants ; she frequented the stations in the neighbourhood for the purpose of procuring food and clothing, which were carried to the fugitive in his retreats ; and no comfort or necessary which it was in her power to procure was wanting to render the hardships of his life as light and endurable as possible. The police being put in motion for the purpose of recapturing the offender, the latter eluded their pursuit for a period of some months, chiefly through the vigilance and sagacity of his protectress, who, on several occasions when they were almost within reach of him, succeeded by some stratagem or other in diverting their course or turning their attention. On one occasion, in particular, when his capture

appeared inevitable, the woman saved him by a scheme which displayed considerable capacity of conception as well as boldness of execution. This was nothing less than volunteering her services to conduct the police to the place of concealment, when she in reality led them far from his retreat. When the fugitive was finally captured and executed for a capital offence, the woman, repelling the addresses of other white men who conceived an admiration for the excellent qualities she had displayed, returned to her tribe, and did not again enter into the society of Europeans. Several instances are also on record of aboriginal females having displayed a high sense of humanity and justice by giving timely notice to settlers and others when the blacks were meditating some aggression either on life or property ; and it is said that for this reason the aborigines never admit their "better halves" into their councils, when they are planning any expedition or enterprise of importance. The chief employments of the females appear to be the making of opossum cloaks, ballombimes, and baskets, the spinning of strings formed from the bark of the currajong tree and native flax, the stringing of the beads of which they form their necklaces, and the digging of a species of fern-root which abounds in some parts of the country, and forms a considerable portion of the food of the aborigines ; all these labours and operations they perform with the assistance of the youths who have not yet been admitted to the privileges of manhood. In the marches and

warlike and hunting expeditions of the aborigines, the females likewise carry whatever lumber the tribes possess—such as the weapons, skins, and provisions.

The powers of mimicry among the aborigines have before been several times remarked upon. It remains to mention particular instances in which the imitative faculties so largely developed among these people have either assisted them on occasions where the descriptive powers have been called into play, or have rendered individuals ridiculous by urging them to adopt the habits and manners of white people. An instance is mentioned in "Bennett's Travels in New South Wales" of a party landing from a vessel on the coast, and, ascertaining from some aborigines whom they met that a vessel, concerning which they were desirous of obtaining some information, had touched at the same place a few days previous, the blacks, by signs, indicated in the most satisfactory manner the arrival of the vessel, the rowing of the boat to shore, and the felling and carrying away of some timber required for use on board. The motions of the men in rowing the boat, and in felling the trees, were described with the greatest minuteness; and the description was wound up by one of the aborigines remarking that the people were "always in a hurry," this allusion being probably suggested by the activity of the sailors, in the performance of their duty, as compared with the habitual indolence of the aboriginal life. A ludicrous exercise of the disposition to imitate led, in former times, to the general preva-

lence of an error regarding their inability to withstand the effects of intoxicating drinks, or anything bearing an affinity thereto. Nothing was more common, some few years since, than to see a number of aborigines, male and female, indulging in all sorts of bacchanal evolutions, staggering, swearing, and hallooing, after having imbibed plentiful potations of a drink formed from the washing of a sugar-bag or a rum-cask. The appearance of drunkenness, which they usually put on on these occasions, led most people to believe that such liquors had the effect of producing intoxication. It has been proved, however, beyond doubt that the appearances in these instances were only simulated.

Backhouse, in the elaborate account of his "Visit to the Australian Colonies," relates an anecdote by which the fallacy of the supposition is clearly proved. An aboriginal, coming into a house in the interior where a young man was engaged in making brine by boiling salt, asked the latter if the liquor were rum, to which the only reply received was an invitation jocularly given to drink. The black having responded by swallowing at a draught about a pint of the brine, commenced tossing about his head, arms, and legs, with all the appearances of inebriation. Being taunted with this false display, he replied, with considerable earnestness, "Me murry drunk, like a gentleman." Smoking—that habit which appears to be adopted by barbarous and semi-barbarous nations as naturally as the practice of eating or drinking—is

universally followed by the aborigines wherever the necessary appliances of pipes and tobacco are placed within their reach. Travellers in the interior describe the habit as having become so deeply-rooted that it is no uncommon circumstance to see a child, after having partaken of a pipe, kneel in its mother's lap for the purpose of sucking.

The practice of shaving, as performed by the New Hollanders, is somewhat unique. Among a people originally unacquainted with the use of iron, and whose edged tools were formed of hard wood, or a piece of stone or shell, the operation, as must naturally be supposed, would be attended with considerable, if not insurmountable, trouble and difficulty, if performed according to the "approved principle" followed by European barbers. It follows, then, that the operation, if no other method of shaving is known to the aborigines, must in most or in all cases remain in desuetude. A substitute, however, has been found for the razor, which in some degree meets the necessities of the case. This is nothing more nor less than a burning stick, by which the beard is singed off the chin, to the no small peril, no doubt, of that feature. That the aborigines are themselves sensible of the disadvantages of this mode of operation may be inferred from the fact that they are very eager to be shaved by Europeans, and even in their first interviews with the latter their friendship is sometimes secured by this species of service.

The system of tattooing or scarifying the person

prevails to some extent among the New Hollanders. The practice differs, however, very materially from that followed by the New Zealanders and the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands. Among the latter the face appears to be the part of the body more usually chosen for the operation, and ornamental effect seems to be the chief object aimed at, the scars being in all cases painted, and the lines being arranged and shaped with a view to render the whole as regular and picturesque as possible. The New Hollanders, on the contrary, for the most part confine the operation to the breast and back; although sometimes the arms are scarified. Unlike the New Zealanders, also, the operation is confined to the males, and does not appear to be regarded so much as an ornament as an honourable and manly distinction, rendering the individual who undergoes the process more respected among his companions, and more acceptable in the eyes of the fair sex. The style of the operation appears to differ in different tribes and localities. In some districts the tattooing consists of a series of small horizontal scars across the breast on either side; in other parts the ribs are marked by scars, in some instances as wide and as long as a man's thumb; among some tribes one arm and one side of the upper parts of the body, behind and before, are scarified. When engaged in combat they refrain, by a tacit understanding, from wounding each other on the parts of the body which are thus marked, showing thereby the high regard in which

they hold the distinguishing marks—preserving them with the same care as would a Roman soldier the cicatrices of the wounds received in battle, as incontestable evidences of his prowess or endurance.

The various plans adopted by the New Hollanders in their hunting operations have before been narrated. Next after the wild animals with which the country abounds, the aboriginals in their primitive state are chiefly indebted to the finny tribes for sustenance. Some description, therefore, of the manner in which they procure supplies of the latter may be somewhat interesting. When a lagoon contains fish they select some narrow outlet or opening on the margin, across which they form a hurdle by driving saplings into the bottom, and interweaving them with twigs, bark, or sedge; this being completed, a second is formed, at a short distance from the first, at the point of the outlet nearest the lagoon; in this latter a small opening is left under the water. The weir being thus finished, several men, armed with clubs or other weapons, proceed into the water, and, forming a line at the end of the lagoon opposite to the weir, proceed slowly along, beating the water as they go. The fish being by this means driven through the opening in one of the hurdles, the aperture is closed by means of a small wicker gate prepared for the purpose, and the fish, being thus enclosed in a small space, are easily taken by the hand or in baskets. Another mode of catching fish is pursued on the sea coast and on the low beaches of rivers and lakes. This latter method

is nothing less than driving the fish on shore. When the aborigines have reason to know that a shoal of fish is moving about contiguous to the beach—a fact which is readily discovered either by the disporting of the scaly gambollers over the surface of their native element, or by the brilliant transparency which the rays of an Australian sun yield to the latter rendering the smallest object perfectly visible for some fathoms deep—they commence their piscatory operations as follows :—Dividing themselves into two bodies, at a proper interval along the beach, they glide in two files into the water, where, moving with the least perceptible noise or agitation, they soon form a semicircle, the extremities of which touch the shore. Having thus enclosed the fish, the aborigines commence contracting the space in which their prey is confined, by moving towards the shore and towards each other, until, having driven the fish into very shallow water, they are enabled either to kill them with their fish-spears, or cast them on shore with their hands. In their fishing operations the aborigines also use the bark of a species of tree, which, being cast into the water, in a short time operates on the fish in such a way as to render them liable to be caught or speared without difficulty. Mussels, oysters, and some other shellfish form a principal resource whence the aborigines draw their supplies of food. As the mussel and large mud oyster are seldom to be procured except by diving, they evince great expertness and power in this exercise, as well as in that of

swimming, remaining under water for some minutes at a time, or swimming across bays and rivers with a speed and endurance altogether unknown among white men.

The law of retaliation universally obtains among the aborigines. The principle, however, appears to be carried to an extent which very often oversteps the bounds of strict justice. This is only what might be expected—for, while a strict observance of the rules of fair play will ever be found to characterize savage nations in their dealings with each other, it is natural to expect that their unguided discrimination will often err in deciding what is just or otherwise in seeking revenge or inflicting punishment. Thus an aboriginal will retaliate a personal injury received from some individual of his tribe or from one of his enemies by inflicting a spear-wound on the gin or wife of the aggressor, when he finds that he cannot conveniently or safely punish the latter. Barbarities of this nature are very frequent among the blacks, the female expiating by a spear-wound on the leg or arm the offences of her mate. When one black injures another accidentally it is no uncommon thing for the man inflicting the injury to hold out a leg or arm to give the injured party an opportunity of requiting himself by the infliction of a spear-wound. Should the latter avail himself of the privilege thus afforded, the parties thereafter consider themselves bound to each other by the strongest ties of friendship. This mode of punishment,

which consists in the infliction of a spear-wound, is very general among the blacks, and is often resorted to when no adequate reason has been given. Thus, for the most trifling offence, an aboriginal will deliberately inflict a spear-wound on the person of his gin, by which she may be tormented and disabled for a considerable period of time.

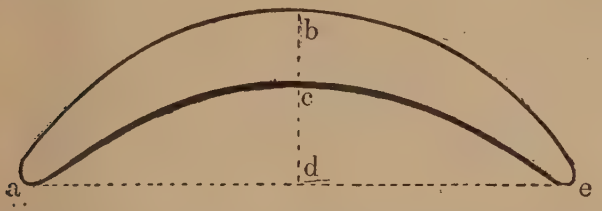
CHAPTER IX.

WEAPONS—ARMOURY—UTENSILS.

THE weapons used by the aborigines, whether in war or hunting, are few in number, and, with the exception of the well-known boomerang, comparatively simple. Among primitive tribes implements of war are generally at the same time articles of necessity and works of art; hence, among the New Zealanders and the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, spears, swords, clubs, and shields are found at once remarkable for the taste and labour bestowed on their construction, and for their deadly capabilities. In proportion, however, as the New Hollanders are below the people just mentioned in point of culture will their weapons be found inferior as implements of warfare and specimens of artistic skill. While, however, a deficiency, as compared with other tribes, is in this respect apparent in the Australian aboriginal, it will be found that in some other particulars his implements and his mode of using them display an amount of invention and ingenuity never attained by any other equally barbarous race. First in the category of aboriginal weapons comes the *boomerang*.

As this appears to be peculiar to the New Hollanders, and as, from its remarkable characteristics, as well as the recent invention of Sir Thomas

Mitchell, it has now acquired a considerable degree of celebrity, the following minute description of its construction and properties, illustrated by the accompanying cut, may not be uninteresting. The extract



appeared some years since in the *United Service Journal*, and is quoted in "Bennett's Travels in New South Wales":—

"The boomerang may be formed of any tough, heavy piece of wood, and is about three-eighths of an inch thick in the middle, gradually tapering off towards the extremities, and rounded on each side from the centre until brought to an edge. *Construction*:—Let A B E be the arc of a circle; the chord A D E = 18 inches; the perpendicular, B D = 17 inches; the width, B C = 3 inches. Thus constructed, the centre of gravity will fall exactly on the edge of its concave surface at C. When used as an offensive weapon it is usually thrown with the convex side outwards, but when intended to return it is held in the reverse position, although it will probably act in either position if properly managed."

For the latter purpose, however, it should be thrown from the hand at a considerable elevation (45 degrees), with a sudden jerk, so as to combine with the projectile force a rapid rotation round its centre of gravity. The rotation acts constantly in opposition to its line of flight, so that if a similar rotation could

be communicated without any projectile force the instrument would move backwards. Now, as the force with which it is thrown is constantly diminishing, while the rotation continues, it must always arrive at a certain point where these opposite forces balance or equalize each other. At that moment the weapon would fall to the ground were it not for its flat surface and rotary motion ; but in consequence of the centre of gravity being so placed that it will always present its broad surface to the air, it cannot descend perpendicularly, but slides down the inclined plane up which it has been thrown, in consequence of the whirling motion continuing after the projectile force has ceased ; so that, if properly thrown, it will pass over the head of the thrower, and often to a considerable distance behind him. On the same principle, a hoop thrown from the hand with a spinning motion inwards will begin to return before it touches the ground, and also the curious, though not so familiar, instance of a ball fired from a musket, the barrel of which has been bent to the left, being carried at long distances considerably to the right of the object aimed at, in consequence of the rotation of the ball on its axis, caused by the right side of the barrel overcoming the projectile force, and thus carrying it across the right line of aim.

The boomerang may be illustrated in a room by merely cutting a piece of card into the same shape as the diagram, then holding it between the finger and thumb of the left hand at an inclination of about

forty-five degrees, and striking one corner with a piece of wood, it will advance several feet and return to the spot from whence it proceeded. I find, however, that this form is not essential to produce a similar effect, although the most convenient to throw from the hand. Any thin flat body of a semicircular or rectilinear figure will return in the same manner if a rotative motion be communicated to it in conjunction with the projectile force at a considerable angle of elevation.

Next in order comes the *spear*, a weapon made more or less thick and heavy according to the strength or taste of the owner, and in general measuring from ten to twelve feet. There are several varieties of spear. The spear proper, which is about to be described, and which seems to be the most common and universal weapon among the blacks, appears to be the pike or lance of European nations, consisting of a shaft and a head; the latter is sometimes formed of a piece of hard wood, sometimes of a piece of shell, flint, or glass. The common spear is never barbed; it is commonly thrown by the hand, with or without the aid of the wommera, although sometimes made so heavy among certain tribes as to lead to the belief that it is used in the same manner as the lance or pike. Another description of spear, somewhat smaller than the former, is always thrown by the wommera; this differs from the last only in its size, and is cast a distance of one hundred yards with unerring precision. A third, the *jagged spear*,

formed like the former, is about eight feet long and the thickness of a finger. This weapon is rendered terrible by the formation of its point or head, which is always barbed, for six or eight inches, with fish-teeth, glass, or pieces of bone. This is sometimes called by Europeans the "death-spear," from the fact that, owing to the peculiar construction of its head, death is the almost inevitable result of a serious wound inflicted by it. In the use of the spear the aborigines employ the foot as well as the arm. When hard pressed in battle they will avoid the necessity of stooping for their arms by raising them with the toes of the feet. This practice renders caution very necessary on the part of Europeans in their first intercourse with them, as several instances are on record of parties of aborigines, apparently unarmed, having invited Europeans to peaceful interviews, when they were subsequently found trailing their spears between their toes on the ground. Governor Phillip, the Æneas of New South Wales, very nearly sacrificed his life to this then unknown artifice. Approaching an aboriginal in the midst of his tribe, on whom he wished to bestow some mark of favour, the savage, mistaking the movement of the Governor for a hostile demonstration, with the speed of thought raised a spear, before unobserved, with his foot, and hurling it with unerring aim, inflicted a dangerous wound. The *wommera*, the instrument by the aid of which the spear is projected, is, in general, like the spear, formed of a piece of wood, about three feet

long and three inches broad, being formed flat towards one of its ends ; at the other end is a hook. The principle on which the wommera is used has been compared to that of the lever, but the sling appears a more familiar and more correct comparison. The mode of using this projectile is as follows :—The hook at the end is fixed into a hollow at the butt-end of the spear formed for the purpose, and being thus held in a line with the spear, the latter at the top, it projects it in precisely the same manner as the sling projects a stone. In addition, however, to the projectile powers of the wommera, another apparent advantage by which its use is accompanied is that it balances or levels the spear, ensuring a direct flight, and enabling the thrower to take aim with more certain precision. This instrument is made to serve another purpose besides that of a throwing-stick, viz., that of a knife. At the end held in the hand, in projecting the spear, and which is formed, as before remarked, flat and broad, a piece of sharpened shell, flint, or quartz is fastened by means of gum, and is made to answer all the purposes of a knife and chisel ; the wommera being thus employed to shape the spears which it afterwards assists to despatch on their errand of death. Another weapon never wanting in the armoury of the aboriginal is the *fishing-spear*. This instrument is in general about twelve to fifteen feet in length, and is armed with four prongs ; sometimes it has three, and is then occasionally a rude imitation of the trident of

Neptune. These prongs are for the most part pointed with a fish-bone, this being the sharpest and most suitable material within the reach of the aborigines. The fishing-spear, as the name implies, is used for the purpose of spearing fish, a use for which it is admirably adapted. This weapon is employed by the aboriginal either in canoes, on the banks of the rivers, or standing in the water watching for his finny prey. When the fish appear the spear is noiselessly approached to within a few inches of the intended victim, and then darted with a precision and force which seldom fail to result in lifting the fish out of its native element. This weapon, as well as the former ones, is always ornamented more or less elaborately, according to the taste or skill of the owner, by having rings or projections left at regular intervals along the shaft, and by various other carvings and figures. Of *clubs* or *waddies* the aborigines construct several descriptions. One kind common among them appears to be merely a sapling or branch with a natural knob, hardened by some process, and slightly cut or notched, so as to give it some degree of proportion and ornament. Another sort of waddy is formed of a very hard description of wood, more elaborately worked than the former, with an elongated quadrangular head, terminating in a very sharp point, which would lead to the belief that it is used as a rapier as well as a truncheon. A third waddy is made somewhat shorter than the last, of a similar species of wood; the head of this, however, is

of a diamond shape, having eight sides or surfaces, and four sharp angles, with which to inflict a blow. The handle of the waddy is always ornamented by a knob, and is marked by a number of notches, which serve the double purpose of ornament and use, by enabling the combatant to take a more secure hold of his weapon. A *sword* is also found among the weapons of the New Hollander. This instrument, which, like the others, is formed of wood, bears no affinity to that formidable weapon the barbed sword of the South Sea Islands, partaking more of the nature of a club. In shape it bears a striking resemblance to the semicircular Turkish scimitar, representations of which are to be met with in the illustrated editions of the "Arabian Nights," the point being formed by cutting off lengthwise a segment of a broad end. The *shield*, or, as it is called in aboriginal parlance, the "eleman," is an important article in the armour of the New Hollander. It is formed of wood, sometimes of bark, and is for the most part of an oval shape. The shield varies as to size, being found from a foot in length to an extent sufficiently capacious to conceal the whole person, and, so far as construction and ornament are concerned, might have belonged to a knight-errant or crusader of the twelfth century instead of a savage of the Australian wilds. The mark which more particularly calls to mind the similarity mentioned, is a cross formed by two parallel lines drawn from top to bottom, and two more from side to side, on the face

of the shield. Sometimes the eleman is decorated with a representation of a hand, formed by placing that member on its surface while the paint or gum with which it is coated is yet moist. A handle, formed of thongs of hide, is fastened on the inner side, and a layer of soft bark, fixed to the shield, saves the knuckles from the effects of friction. Besides the implements above enumerated, and which comprise the principal weapons of war and hunting among the aborigines, numerous other articles of a similar though inferior description are met with, varying in design and construction among different tribes. Of these may be mentioned a small spear, formed of reed, and used as a *javelin* in offensive operations.

When a tribe of aborigines encamp in any locality an armoury is formed, in which the whole of the weapons belonging to the warriors are deposited. The site chosen is generally in the shade of some gigantic gum-tree, or other towering lord of the forest, round the trunk of which, in a standing position, and with a due regard to regularity, are placed the spears, while the boomerangs, clubs, shields, and other smaller weapons are arranged with equal care on the turf at the base of the tree.

Among the utensils of the New Holland tribes may be mentioned a vessel resembling a calabash, used for carrying water; this is formed out of a globular-shaped substance, composed of an excrescence of the gum-tree, and which, when hollowed out, forms a vessel well adapted to the use for which it is intended.

Baskets are formed from long pieces of bark brought together at the ends, and tied by cords formed from strings of bark, the handle being formed of similar material. Another description of basket, called a "migit," is formed of rushes, woven with a degree of taste and skill which have excited the admiration of Europeans. The rushes used in the construction of these baskets are of various colours—green, white, and pink predominating—arranged so as to produce by the various figures, and by the contrast of colours, a highly ornamental effect. The hatchet, or tomahawk, is an implement of universal necessity among the aborigines. Since the commencement of intercourse with Europeans iron tomahawks are much sought after, and have become plentiful among the aborigines throughout the greater part of the territory. The tomahawk of the aboriginal is, however, altogether a different article; this latter is formed of a piece of stone or flint, ground to an edge at one end. A handle is formed by two pieces of wood of a flat shape, between which, towards one end, the head is placed; the strips of wood are then bound firmly together by ligatures of bark or other description of twine on each side of the stone and at intervals along the handle, and the head is secured more firmly by means of gum, which is melted into the interstices where the stone and wood are joined. Besides the fizgig before described, the aborigines use hooks and lines in catching fish. The hooks are formed of mother-of-pearl, and are not barbed, but are curved to

a greater extent than those used by Europeans, which is, no doubt, intended to supply the place of the barb by rendering the hold on the fish, once obtained, more secure. The hook has a knob at the end, to which the line is fastened, to render the fastening more secure and less difficult. The line is in general of two strands, made from a peculiar kind of bark, and twisted with considerable neatness and skill. Fishing with hooks and lines is altogether confined to the females, who sometimes relieve the dulness of the employment by singing, in chorus or singly. Nothing, perhaps, illustrates the industry and patience of which the New Hollander appears to be capable more fully than the formation of the fishing-hook just described. The material of which it is formed, as is well known, is only to be found in a state and in a shape the most unfavourable to being transformed into a hook, and nothing but a most wearisome and tedious course of grinding and cutting could succeed in producing the perfect instrument with which aboriginal anglers hook their prey.

CHAPTER X.

FUNERAL RITES—SPONSORIAL CUSTOM—JUVENILE SPIRITS — PERSONAL BRAVERY — "STRIKING A LIGHT"—THE BOUGH OF PEACE.

ONE of the most striking instances in which a similarity is to be traced between the customs of the aborigines of New Holland and those of civilized nations, particularly those of Oriental countries, is to be seen in the manner in which they dispose of their dead. One of their customs in this respect—that of burning the body, with considerable ceremony, on a pile of wood —at once suggests a comparison with the practices of many of those nations which occupy the first position in the pages of history. This rite is at present apparently less frequent among the blacks in the settled portions of the territory—if at all practised in those parts—than formerly. That, however, it was a general custom in former days is attested by several authorities. Collins, in his "Account of the Colony" in the days of its first settlement, gives a minute description of the burning, within the bounds of the present city of Sydney, of the remains of the wife of the celebrated Binnelong, the aboriginal who accompanied Governor Phillip to Europe, the ashes of the deceased being afterwards collected by the husband, and buried with considerable care beneath a mound of earth. Several other similar ceremonies are detailed by the same writer. It appears, however, that only the

bodies of such as had passed the middle age were privileged to be disposed of in the manner referred to, and which is hence to be esteemed the more honourable mode of sepulture. The bodies of young people were buried in the ordinary way, or otherwise disposed of, according to the custom of the tribe, such as by placing the corpse, enveloped in folds of bark, on a raised hurdle, or across the limbs of a tree. Sometimes a portion of the weapons or utensils of the deceased, as a basket, spear, and fizgig, were buried along with the corpse. In connection with this branch of aboriginal customs one of the worst features in the character of the New Hollander is brought to light. This is the crime of child-murder, accompanied with the extreme of barbarity. When an infant happens to be deprived of its mother by death, it appears that it is no uncommon thing to bury the living infant in the same grave with its deceased parent; the reason alleged by the perpetrators for the cruel act is that the infant being bereaved of its natural nurse, and other females being adverse to take it under their guardianship, its life would be a course of lingering misery worse than death itself. The existence of this species of infanticide was first made known in the early days of colonization by a party of officers who witnessed the interment of a female, whose surviving infant was thus interred by the father, the work of death being gone through ere the Europeans, who were previously unacquainted with the intent, had time to interpose their influence to save the little victim.

While, however, it is ascertained that very young infants are, or have been, immolated in the manner described, another custom is known to prevail among the aborigines, which proves that they are not by any means indifferent to the fate of their offspring. This custom bears an affinity to the system of sponsorship practised in the Christian church—the difference being that, in the latter case, the duties imposed generally end with the ceremony, while in the former case the duties are generally strictly exacted and scrupulously performed. Thus, when the father of a family dies, his children are invariably taken under protection by some relative or other member of the tribe, on whom the title of the deceased "Bianna," signifying father or chief, is conferred. On this new guardian devolves the self-imposed duties of hunting and fishing for the sustenance of his wards, directing their movements, protecting them from outrage, training them in the exercises of their people, and in every respect providing for their well-being and safety, until such time as they become capable of depending on their own resources. This custom, the existence of which, in some tribes at least, is established beyond doubt, would imply a knowledge and practice of the social duties among the New Hollanders for which few would be disposed to give them credit who have not attentively considered their character, and observed therein the gleamings of the better traits of humanity.

Among the articles of faith of the aborigines, in

connection with their ideas of a future state, they hold the belief that for a certain period after death, and previous to migration to their final abode, the *manes* of the departed hover about the country in the neighbourhood of their mortal haunts, in the shape of little children. During the preparatory stage of spiritual existence they inhabit, according to the myth, the luxuriant foliage of the tallest trees, disporting themselves amongst the leaves and branches in their vernal and sunny retreats. Little fishes, with which they are plentifully supplied, are said to form the food of the youthful spirits while sojourning in their intermediate home—a rather strange description of provision for the inabitants of such a peculiarly sylvan abode as theirs! The seeming inconsistency can only be accounted for by the absence on Australian trees of almost every description of fruit.

Many circumstances and anecdotes tend to show that bravery is among the most prominent qualities of the aboriginal race. Although sometimes cautious and watchful in their first interviews with Europeans, they have uniformly on those occasions manifested a coolness and courage which have excited the admiration of the whites. Sometimes indviduals among them, who have never before seen a white man, have walked into the midst of a party of armed Europeans with a confidence and frankness which amounted almost to a reckless indifference. Among the numerous instances in which individual bravery has

been displayed by aborigines, one is particularly deserving of notice. A traveller, while pursuing an equestrian tour in the earlier days of the settlement, suddenly came upon a solitary aboriginal who had strayed from his tribe on a hunting expedition. The black, who had never before, in all probability, seen a white man, and certainly had never seen such an animal as a horse with a rider on its back, having partially recovered from the first effects of surprise and wonder, and probably terror, which the sudden appearance of so strange an apparition produced, retreated a few paces, and then, turning round and throwing himself into an attitude of defence, poised a formidable spear which he held in his hand, evidently resolved to hurl it with effect should the horseman, who in the meantime had halted his steed, advance. This first scene of a romantic little drama—which scene is submitted for the consideration of all and several of our Australian artists—continued for a few minutes, during which the aboriginal, from the expression of amaze and terror which commingled with that of determination and ferocity in his countenance, regarded the horse and rider as one being. In order to put an end to this involuntary representation of statuary, and probably dreading that the spear which his confronter held poised in air might receive an impulse anything but favourable to his own personal safety, the European slowly and cautiously dismounted, and, standing a few paces from his horse, made friendly

gestures towards his new acquaintance. The latter, now somewhat reassured by finding that he had to deal with a being bearing a close affinity to himself in shape and proportions, having hesitated for a moment, at last drove his spear upright into the ground, and slowly approached the stranger, keeping, however, at a respectful distance from the horse, towards which he occasionally cast a glance of suspicion and scrutiny. After a time, the parties having become mutually confiding, entered into a conversation by means of signs and gestures, which terminated by the New Hollander pointing out to the other a spot in which he would be able to procure water, of which he was in quest, stepping aside out of the way of the horse when his rider had remounted, and bidding good-bye with a movement of considerable dignity and politeness.

Among tribes of so very unsettled and migratory habits as the aborigines, who seldom reside in the same locality for more than a day or two, the preserving or procuring sufficient fire to ignite the wood with which they cook their food, or warm the air around their couches at night, must form an important part of their everyday economy. Very generally, when they remove from one locality to another, the females carry burning sticks in their hands to serve the necessary purpose at the next camping-place. As fire cannot always be preserved in this way, however, owing to the length of their marches and the various vicissitudes to which the travellers are subjected in

their wanderings, it is necessary that some method of producing fire should have been discovered. Necessity has pointed out to the aboriginal a simple and ever-available means of attaining this end by the friction of two pieces of a peculiar description of dried wood very plentiful in the bush. Ignition is produced by making a hole in one of the pieces, into which the sharpened end of the other piece is introduced ; this is turned round with both hands with as much rapidity as possible, until the desired object is attained. As it often happens that it requires a considerable amount of friction to produce the fire, several blacks generally take part in the operation, seating themselves in a circle round the fire-stick and taking part in the work of friction by turns.

It would appear as though Providence had implanted in the breasts of all mankind certain particular instincts, feelings, and emotions, by which the kindred of the entire race may be incontrovertibly fixed, in anticipation of the false theories of those who would divide mankind into distinct classes, the one enjoying higher attributes, and, as a consequence, entitled to hold unlimited sway over the other. "One touch of nature makes the whole world akin" is a maxim as true as it is trite ; but it is not only the manifestations of a common feeling which prove the kindred of the world. There are certain customs and certain symbols practised and understood by all the races of mankind which prove a common origin and common kindred none the less. That with which we have to do in the

present instance is the significance attached to a green bough, when carried as a propitiatory symbol, by the New Hollanders in common with the natives of nearly all parts of the world. That the carrying or bearing of a branch by a stranger in his first interviews with the aborigines is understood to be a sign of friendly intentions is a fact proved by the experience of more than one explorer and traveller. Captain Sturt, in the journal of his expeditions in South Australia, mentions the efficacy of the symbol in disarming, on more than one occasion, the hostility of strange tribes, securing a peaceable interview when all other means had failed. Travellers among the Indians of South and North America also mention that the carrying of a green bough by strangers is understood by the former as a token that their intentions are of a peaceful and amicable nature.

CHAPTER XI.

MISGIVINGS—TRIBES OF BOTANY BAY AND PORT JACKSON — MANLY COVE AND RUSHCUTTERS' BAY.

WHEN, on the 17th and 18th of January, 1788, the fleet destined for the colonization of New Holland, for the second time in the history of navigation dividing these waters with a European keel, passed through the heads of Botany Bay, the motley host of marines, sailors, and prisoners which crowded the decks to gaze on the surrounding scenery were greeted from the shore by loud shouts, uttered in a strange and unknown language. A little observation showed that these sounds proceeded from groups of the aboriginal inhabitants of the country, who, in threatening attitudes, their formidable spears resting on their throwing-sticks, seemed to menace from the land the ships and their occupants. Presently the people on board the fleet believed they could distinguish some of the words to which those singular landsmen gave utterance, and, loud above all others, they fancied they could hear the exclamation "Warawara." These words were, as before observed, accompanied by threatening gestures and a display of every description of arms, indicating that the then possessors of the country were not pleased with the appearance of so formidable an array of those huge

canoes on their fishing waters, and that they still less relished the coming among them of so large a force of a strange and powerful people as they beheld swarming on the ships. A few days afterwards, when the same fleet—the commanders of the expedition finding that Botany Bay was not a safe anchorage, and that the country in its immediate vicinity was not a desirable locality for establishing the settlement—sailed round and entered Port Jackson, the same mystical sounds of "Wara-wara" greeted the ears of the people in the squadron as they passed the numerous outstretching headlands and the beautiful retreating bays of the magnificent harbour, now for the first time explored by civilized men. Subsequently, when the Europeans came to have intercourse with the aborigines, and acquired something of their dialects, it was found that these words with which the colonists were first greeted in their new home meant simply "Go away! go away!" And well might the original inhabitants of these delightful localities exclaim to the intruders "Go away!" for there can be little doubt that whatever of felicity the simple nature and uncultivated ways of the New Hollander permitted him to enjoy was here possessed by him to the fullest extent. That peninsula on which the city at present stands, almost encircled by Cook's River on one side, and by the waters of the bay now known as Long Cove on the other, must have been in those days a land teeming with milk and honey for the tribes by which it was possessed. In those silent,

sheltered bays, rivers, and creeks which surrounded and interspersed the country in endless variety, like the carvings in a piece of elaborate sculpture, fish of every description was to be obtained at all seasons in the greatest abundance; numerous freshwater lagoons, swamps, and rivulets were diffused over the face of the land, which swarmed with excellent game, to be readily procured by the snare, or offering a tempting object on which the aboriginal marksman might exercise his skill in the use of the boomerang. The country, thickly wooded or covered by a low brushwood or heath, and in some parts producing a rich pasture, afforded a retreat and sustenance to numbers of those quadrupeds which formed the flocks and herds of the tribes, while wild honey and wild fruit were found in such plenty as to render them of little value as articles of food. Under these peculiar circumstances it is not to be wondered at that the New Hollanders at first displayed so little hospitality towards the strangers, and that, in their own way, they entered so decided, although ineffectual, a protest against the seizure of their lands. It may be that even a stronger motive than the dread of immediate disturbances actuated the New Hollanders on these shores in their aversion to the settlement of the country. Who will say that a gleam of prophetic inspiration did not then foreshadow to the mind of the black man of Botany Bay and Port Jackson the fearful fact that, in sixty years after the coming of these strangers, his entire people

would have disappeared from the face of the land —a whole-offering sacrificed at the shrine of civilization?*

At the period above referred to the tribes inhabiting the country in the immediate vicinity of Port Jackson and Botany Bay appear to have been numerous in proportion to the advantages which they enjoyed as to territory. They inhabited both sides of the harbour, and were found dispersed over the entire country along the coast as far as Broken Bay, where a large and distinct tribe was located. One of the first voyagers speaks of them as appearing to be "a very lively, inquisitive race—a straight and thin but well-made people, small in their limbs, but very active." Numerous are the anecdotes extant of the first colonists and their unsophisticated neighbours, with whom they wisely endeavoured to cultivate the most friendly relations. To this the Europeans were urged both as a matter of precaution against their hostility and as a matter of policy, in securing their assistance in their efforts towards exploring and settling the country. In general the aborigines, after a time, evinced no indisposition to reciprocate the friendly feeling of the new-comers, but, as the fact became established that the latter intended to settle themselves permanently in the country, and as their encroachments became more extensive, a

* From semi-official information, recently made public, it appears that the aborigines of the county of Cumberland have become entirely extinct.

shyness and reserve began to be observed in the manners of the blacks, which occasionally broke out into decided hostility. The first quarrel arose from the intrusion of the whites on the fishing grounds of the tribes. When the fleet sailed from England for the purpose of founding the colony, it was very naturally anticipated that, owing to the distance of the settlement from Europe, a scarcity of provisions would, in the course of time, be experienced. Accordingly, a number of fishing seines were procured, to be used as occasion might require for the benefit of the colony; and one of the first measures adopted by the chiefs of the settlement was the formation of a fishing party, who, on certain days, proceeded to one of the bays lying towards the sea, for the purpose of casting the seine. It was one of the instructions given to this party that a portion of whatever fish might be taken should be given to the aborigines who happened to be present at the time—an instruction always complied with. The custom, however, like other customs, soon grew into a law; so thought the Port Jackson tribe, a number of whom came on the fishermen one day when they had made a very successful haul, and carried away, without asking permission, a large portion of the best of the fish, several of their brethren being stationed on a neighbouring rock during the transaction, prepared to discharge their spears in the event of a contest. This led to an armed party being thenceforward sent with the fishers, and, the gratuitous

distribution to the aborigines being discontinued in consequence of the nefarious appropriation just mentioned, ill-will towards the Europeans on the part of the former was the result. Another principal cause which led to mutual distrust between the two races was an unfortunate affray which took place about this time, at Botany, between the seamen of the French expedition, under La Perouse, and the aborigines. The two vessels composing this great navigator's fleet anchored in Botany Bay on the day succeeding the arrival of Governor Phillip's squadron, and, remaining there after the departure of the latter fleet for Port Jackson, a misunderstanding arose between the French and the Botany tribe, which resulted in the former using their firearms and shooting down a few of the latter. The New Hollanders being unable to distinguish between the two nations, and looking on all white people as the same, considered the punishment they had received as the act of all, and believed themselves justified in retaliating on English and French indiscriminately. Some efforts were made by the authorities, shortly after their arrival in the colony, to ascertain the numbers of the aboriginal population in the vicinity of the settlement. For this purpose the first measure adopted was to despatch a party to visit the several bays of the harbour, to ascertain the number of canoes which the blacks possessed. These were found to amount to the large number of 67, each capable of carrying from two to five or six individuals ; from which it may be inferred that the

population in the immediate vicinity which continually, or from time to time, engaged in fishing operations was very considerable. A party of twelve soldiers, on one occasion, travelling across the country from Sydney to Botany, for the purpose, if possible, of seizing certain blacks who had committed some depredations among the colonists, fell in with a group of aboriginals amounting to 212 in all. On the approach of the military the women and children took shelter in a cave, while the men came boldly forward, armed with their spears and clubs, and by voice and gesture warned the strangers off. On the officer in command, however, making friendly signs, and giving them to understand that he did not entertain hostile intentions, the aboriginals laid down their arms and a peaceable interview took place, when it was discovered that the offenders did not form a part of this tribe. Although the Europeans were, on this occasion, completely in the power of the blacks, the latter did not evince the slightest disposition to act with treachery; but they manifested some impatience during the stay of the former, and seemed pleased when they were departing. From the two foregoing facts and other similar data it has been pretty accurately ascertained that the aboriginal population of the country immediately adjoining the coast, extending from Port Jackson to Broken Bay, amounted, at the founding of the colony, to 1,500 persons—a large population for so limited an extent of country, and capable of offering very effective resistance to the progress of the

infant colony, if so disposed and if influenced by common motives.

Few, if any, of the citizens of Sydney are unacquainted with those localities, situate between Sydney and the Heads, known as Manly Beach and Rushcutters' Bay. The former of these localities has been beyond recollection the favourite resort of amateur fishermen and the more adventurous class of pleasure-seeking excursionists ; the other is the long-established rendezvous of "cits" and their families, seeking every Sabbath a little relaxation amid the pleasures of rustic scenery from the monotonous recurrence of their everyday avocations ; yet comparatively few of those who from time to time derive pleasure from a visit to those scenes are aware of the origin of the names by which they are designated—if, indeed, they have ever given the subject so much as a passing thought. Well, now that we have, as we fondly imagine, excited their curiosity on this point, we purpose to satisfy the inquiries which must naturally follow. And, first, to describe one of these scenes : Manly Cove, or Manly Beach as it is sometimes called, is one of the first of these indentations of the harbour to be met with, on the north side, after entering the Heads ; it is sheltered, as most of these beautiful little bays are, by a gently ascending enclosure, covered with a luxuriant wood—the surrounding eminence separated from the waters of the bay by a sloping sandy beach, extending into the harbour for several paces at a moderate depth. Here

it was that, a day or two after the arrival of the fleet in Botany Bay, the boats despatched by the Commodore for the purpose of exploring Port Jackson, previous to transferring the fleet thence, were surrounded by a number of aborigines, who waded into the water, and, after examining the boats and scrutinizing everything they saw, received whatever presents were offered them, and returned highly pleased. The frank, fearless, and *manly* bearing of the New Hollanders on this occasion suggested to the good taste of the first Governor the name which the spot bears to the present day. It is to be regretted that the other locality should not have received its designation from circumstances similarly auspicious and similarly pleasing to all parties. But as in the best plays of the great dramatist the serious succeeds to the comic, and tears give place to laughter, so in the two matters under consideration a tragic occurrence succeeds to a serio-comic scene, and as the one gave a name to Manly Beach, so the other conferred on the locality where the occurrence took place the appellation which it retains to the present day. No sooner had the site of the new city been chosen, at the head of Sydney Cove, than the workmen of the colony were set about constructing cottages and barracks for the reception of the several classes of people of which the infant community was composed. Wood and stone were to be found in abundance in the immediate vicinity, so that little difficulty stood in the way of the performance of the

chief part of this work; but when the primitive buildings came to be roofed a difficulty presented itself in the want of material for covering. Slates were out of the question; the art of shingle-making was not as yet known or practised; thatch only remained, but whence was even this homely material to come? Some fertile genius, whose faculties brightened in emergency, suggested that rushes would answer the purpose, if they could be found. Accordingly parties were despatched to explore the marshy spots in the neighbourhood of the town, where such would be likely to grow, and at the head of a bay about two miles east of Sydney they were found in abundance, thickly fringing a stream, whose source was a small cascade about half a mile from the beach, and which wound its way thence through a sheltered valley to the waters of the bay. To this spot accordingly were despatched every day two men for the purpose of cutting and drying the rushes, which were conveyed to the town when so prepared by other parties. One evening, those two men failing to return as was their wont to their companions at the Cove, a party was next morning sent to ascertain the cause of their absence, and on proceeding to the spot the lifeless bodies of the unfortunate rushcutters were found, at some distance apart, pierced with several spear wounds and battered with many blows. Hence Rushcutters' Bay.

CHAPTER XII.

CONFIDENCE AND CAUTION—CAPTURE AND ESCAPE OF BINNELONG AND COLE-BE — SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF BINNELONG.

No sooner had the ceremony of inaugurating the settlement been gone through, at the head of Sydney Cove, on the 26th January, 1788, than a tribe of aborigines made their appearance among the surrounding wood, peeping cautiously through the trees at the new occupants of the beach. They had been attracted to the spot by the firing of the military, three volleys from whose muskets announced the planting of the British ensign among these solitudes, and they came, as might be expected, completely armed and prepared to act on the defensive. Governor Phillip, wishing to cultivate in every possible manner the goodwill of the aborigines, leaving the encampment, approached unarmed the foremost of the tribe, for the purpose of allaying their apprehensions and obtaining an interview. As soon as the object of the Commandant became understood, one of the savages, who appeared to be the chief, laying down his spear and other arms, approached half-way to the interview, and the Governor having made him understand by signs that he was desirous that his people and the blacks should live as friends, invited him into the encampment for the purpose of inspecting the objects

of wonder which the Europeans were enabled to show. To this the chief consented, and accompanied the Governor alone for that purpose. On approaching close to the beach, however, where the tents were erected, and where he beheld all the soldiers of the expedition drawn up under arms, his confidence partially forsook him, and suddenly standing, he gazed for a few moments at the scene before him, and then glancing behind in the direction of his friends and countrymen, and seeing that he had now approached too far to retreat, he commenced a most animated harangue in his native tongue, in which, judging by his looks and gestures, he gave the Governor to understand that if any treachery were practised towards him his people would revenge him in the most signal manner on the entire colony. Having thus entered his protest against any unfair dealing, and having cautioned those in whose power he found himself placed against the consequences of any act of theirs against his life or his liberty, he advanced with his former boldness within the lines of the camp, the Governor having again assured him as best he could that no treachery was intended. He then proceeded to inspect the several strange objects which presented themselves—the muskets and accoutrements of the soldiery, the implements of the workmen, the tents, the cooking apparatus, and concluded his scrutiny by gazing anxiously for some moments into a pot in which some meat was being boiled for the mess of the people. He was finally

presented with some suitable gifts in the shape of a hatchet and some other articles of less value, with which he departed, highly pleased with his interview.

The name of Binnelong has been already mentioned more than once in the course of these sketches, in connection with the early colonization of the country. His name is now introduced in conjunction with that of another aboriginal of Port Jackson, a black named Cole-be, who, although a chief of one of the tribes, while Binnelong was only a common man, did not occupy so prominent a position in his day, and has not been rendered so celebrated as the latter. The names of these two men, however, stand most conspicuous among the aborigines who figured in those days, and it will, perhaps, therefore be interesting to know something of their history and their fate. When the first colonists arrived it was at once deemed advisable, for several reasons, to cultivate the fellowship and goodwill of the aboriginal inhabitants. The first step towards this end would be, of course, to become acquainted with their language, and impart to them a knowledge of the language of the colonists. Owing to the timidity of the blacks, however, as well as their impatience of restraint, and their indisposition to remain among the colonists for any lengthened period, it was found impossible to carry out the plan proposed by the means at first adopted. These means consisted in enticing the blacks to the settlement by presents, and afterwards seeking to induce them to remain, by kind

and conciliatory treatment. Sometimes an individual would be induced to stay among his new companions for a day or two, but just as his teachers and guardians would deem that they had succeeded in domesticating their unsophisticated ward, Nature would resume her sway over her *élève*, and he would fly to her arms amid the depths of his native woods. Repeated experiments were thus made, and terminated in the manner just described, until the authorities at length perceived that some other method must be resorted to besides allurement for the purpose of subjecting one or more of the natives of the country to the yoke of European customs, and imparting to them a knowledge of their intentions and wishes. Accordingly the only course now left, that of a gentle compulsion, was determined upon, and a party was thereupon despatched down the harbour in a boat, with instructions to seize the first intelligent-looking aboriginal they might come across. In pursuance of their orders this party proceeded to one of those bays to which they knew the blacks were accustomed to resort for fishing and other purposes, and there they met with a small party of those for whom they sought, and in a short time succeeded in bringing them to a parley. A few of the crew of the boat, having been previously instructed by the officer in charge how to proceed, now stepped ashore, and, watching their opportunity, seized one of the best-looking of the blacks at a moment when he was separated from his companions, and

carrying him through the water in their arms, threw him into the boat, where he was held till the party had rowed beyond the reach of the spears or other missiles of the captive's companions on shore. He was then tied in the bottom of the boat, and thus conveyed to the Governor's residence, all the time crying piteously, and calling in vain for assistance to his brethren on the beach. These latter had fled panic-stricken into the bush on first observing the aggressive intentions of the party of whites, but returned on seeing that the latter were content with the possession of one of their number, and continued to follow the boat along the shore, and to respond to the calls of the captive so long as they were audible and while the treacherous craft remained in sight. The aboriginal who had thus been so unceremoniously and suddenly carried from the midst of his companions and countrymen, and hurried a captive into the society of strange and unsympathizing men, was the afterwards redoubtable Binnelong. On being carried before the Governor, the latter ordered, as one of the writers of the day expresses it, that he should be "ornamented with an iron shackle, placed round one leg, to prevent escape." A little further on, however, the reader is given to understand that to the shackle was attached a rope, at one end of which was an individual holding it in his hand, whose duty it was to accompany the future interpreter throughout the limited peregrinations permitted to him, and thus effectually guard against his flight. It now

suggested itself to the mind of the Governor that it was not desirable that the captive should be thus entirely sequestered from the companionship of his old and more congenial associates. It was seen, on the contrary, that it would prove consoling to the mind of the latter, as well as materially facilitate the end in view, if another black could be procured for training at the settlement. Accordingly it was resolved to capture another, and this resolve it was which led to the seizure of Cole-be. The manner in which this feat was accomplished differs somewhat from the mode of Binnelong's seizure. A party were ordered to hover about the outskirts of the town at all hours of the day and night, in readiness to seize the first black who made his appearance—an occurrence for which they were not likely to wait long, as several blacks were accustomed to visit the stockades at all hours by stealth, either actuated by curiosity or bent on an errand of plunder. The first who presented himself was the luckless Cole-be. He was the chief of one of the tribes, and the friend of Binnelong, and had probably been loitering about the town for the purpose of having a stolen interview with the latter, with a view to effecting his deliverance. In this, however, if it were his design, he not only signally failed, but literally ran his own head into the snare, for the kidnapping party, suddenly springing up round him, threw a halter round his neck, and in this manner conveyed him, overwhelmed with terror, before the Governor. He was "ornamented with an

iron shackle" and placed along with Binnelong. The two friends being now placed in communication, the first thing they turned their attention to was the concerting of measures for their escape. This they could not hope to effect either by force or stealth, and they accordingly resolved to employ stratagem. Pretending, therefore, after a few days, to become more reconciled to their loss of liberty, they succeeded so far as in some degree to lessen the vigilance of their keepers; and one evening, while they and their guards went to their evening meal, Cole-be, on some pretence, obtained permission to sit outside the hut, the man who held the cord attached to his leg sitting inside with Binnelong and his companions. The latter, as previously arranged, succeeded in engaging the attention of the inmates of the hut—among whom was Cole-be's keeper—by chaunting aboriginal songs and going through divers entertaining antics, while Cole-be slipped the cord off the shackle, and, clearing at one bound the fence which interposed a final barrier between him and liberty, was in a moment beyond the reach of pursuit. After the escape of his companion Binnelong appeared to be more contented than before, and dissembled so well the irksomeness with which he submitted to his condition that in a short time his guard was removed and he was permitted to roam at liberty over the premises in which he lived. One day, however, he was missed by the people about the Governor's residence, where he had latterly been living; and a search

being made it was found that he had decamped, leaving behind every article of an excellent suit of clothing with which he had been presented.

Thus were these last efforts of the Governor to domesticate an aboriginal most vexatiously frustrated, after so large an amount of labour and perseverance had been expended in the task. What force and application, however, could not effect time brought about without trouble or difficulty. Binnelong and Cole-be were afterwards frequently seen by parties of the whites in their expeditions over the harbour or around the country, and although the one had so flagrantly deceived them, and although the other had fled their companionship with such determination on a former occasion, they now appeared nowise shy or fearful of their whilom captors, conversing and exchanging civilities with them whenever they came into the neighbourhood of their encampments or haunts. On one of these occasions Binnelong sent his compliments to the Governor, who had uniformly treated him with kindness and consideration, and expressed a desire to see him. He added that he was unwilling to proceed to the settlement, but said that he would meet the Governor at an appointed place, on a certain day, if the latter chose to come. The information being conveyed to Governor Phillip, he determined to comply with Binnelong's wish, believing that by so doing he would be advancing the interests of the community entrusted to his charge, and accordingly, on the day fixed, set ou

for the appointed place. And now, reader, you behold a scene which perhaps you could hardly have deemed possible—the founder and Governor of the colony, the representative of King George the Third and a commodore in the Royal Navy, proceeding in the most ceremonious manner, surrounded by several of his chief officers, to hold a parley with a rude aboriginal of the coast of New Holland. The spot fixed for the interview was one of those bays of the harbour lying towards the Heads, the usual places of assemblage for the aborigines in those days. Here the Governor and his party were met on landing by Binnelong, who, true to his promise, had proceeded thither at the appointed hour, accompanied by a number of his companions and friends. The meeting was cordial and frank on both sides, the Europeans evincing no inclination to allude to Binnelong's former breach of confidence, while the latter, on his part, met the advances of the former without the slightest appearance of distrust or dread of treachery. As a considerable portion of the day had been spent in proceeding to the place of meeting and in the subsequent interview, the party resolved upon dining on the spot, and bringing forth a stock of provisions which they had carried with them, they partook of a meal seated on the green sward, under the shade of the surrounding gum trees, Binnelong and his companions sharing the Governor's hospitality. At the termination of the rustic feast, the Governor presented the aboriginals with sundry gifts, and having obtained

from Binnelong a promise to return to Government House on an appointed day, the interview terminated, and the Governor's party re-embarked. Cole-be does not appear to have been present on this occasion, although he afterwards was accustomed to frequent the settlement and enjoy the favour of the officers.

Interviews such as the one just described were in those days very frequent in the colony. In addition to the desire which the colonists naturally entertained of cultivating the friendship of the aborigines, they were urged to cultivate their society by other motives. In a community such as then formed the colony, the number of those with whom the officers and the more honourable portion of the colonists could associate must have been very small. In order, therefore, to lessen the monotony of their avocations and relieve the dullness which, as a matter of course, prevailed in the new settlement, they courted the society of the aborigines, in whom they found men as yet untainted by the multiplied vices which prevailed among the great bulk of their own countrymen. Independent of that recommendation they also found among the New Hollanders men whose bravery, intrepidity, intelligence, and candour excited their admiration and commanded their esteem—men with whose character the term savage was utterly incompatible, and whose rudeness extended no further than their uncouth appearance and their uncivilized mode of life. Hence the reason why Governor Phillip and his officers could condescend to comply with an invitation from

a mere "blackfellow," exchange compliments with him and his companions, and, finally, as the last act of condescension, invite the aboriginal band to partake of his cheer and eat with him at the same meal.

On the appointed day Binnelong presented himself before the Governor, dressed in a suit of clothes which had been forwarded to him at his own request in order that he might present a decent and becoming appearance when he again joined the company of his old friends. An apartment was allotted to him in the Governor's residence; every attention was bestowed on his comfort and convenience, and he did not again quit the colony till he accompanied Governor Phillip to Europe. Of his career in England but little has been ascertained. Whether he was carried before the King and royal family by his protector, whether he was visited by lords and ladies, whether he was run after and cheered by the populace, whether, in fine, he was regarded as a prodigy and a hero, inasmuch as he was the first aboriginal inhabitant of the antipodes who visited England, no evidence exists to enable us to say or gainsay. Certain it is, however, that amid the wonders of civilization by which he was surrounded, amid the glare of the most gorgeous creations of art and science, and in the possession of all the comforts and luxuries which the capital of Great Britain could afford, he sighed for the sunny clime of his youth, and anxiously looked forward to the time when the

returning ship should bear him back to the scenes of his boyhood and the land of his birth.

At length the wished-for time did arrive, and he embarked with a light and joyous heart on his voyage towards his Australian home, where in due time he arrived, and was in some degree recompensed for his temporary exile by the warm greetings of his friends and countrymen. The brilliancy of Binnelong's career was, however, destined to be clouded at this period by a circumstance which is known to have embittered the life of many a greater hero, if the stories of some poets and historians are to be credited. His faithless "gin," either wearied of the loneliness which his absence imposed, or allured from her fidelity by seductive wiles, had, during his stay in England, transferred her fealty to another lord. This injury Binnelong did not allow to pass unresented, and a battle took place in which both the aggressor and the aggrieved suffered considerable personal injury; but, although our hero fought and bled in defence of his honour, he did not resume possession of his faithless wife, but sought and won another bride.

Collins's "Account of the Colony," from which these particulars are chiefly gleaned, contains a portrait of Binnelong, taken while he was in England, in which he is represented in a sort of military uniform. He is said to have accommodated himself wonderfully to civilized customs and habits, imitating with considerable success the manners and ceremonies of his

betters. In personal appearance he was one of the best specimens of the aboriginal race. His hair, of which he possessed a luxuriant crop, had, during his stay in England, acquired a smoothness and gloss which attracted general attention, completely controverting the erroneous opinion which for a long time prevailed, and which is now entertained by some, that the New Hollanders were of negro origin.

He continued to reside at Government House after his return, and was accustomed to assume a patronizing and authoritative tone towards the aborigines of the neighbourhood, declaring that it was his resolution to put a stop to those barbarous practices in which they had previously indulged ; that he would compel them to wear clothing and adopt an industrious and settled mode of life. On one occasion his dignity was greatly shocked by his sister running to Government House to welcome him home, with her infant seated on her shoulder in the usual style, and wearing only the scanty habiliments of her caste. He thenceforth prohibited any of his relatives or friends appearing near Government House till they had arrayed themselves in a suitable costume. In this way did Binnelong pass the remainder of his days in the colony, treated by the whites as a man distinguished from his fellows by superior intelligence and by his knowledge of European society, and honoured by the blacks on account of the favour which he enjoyed at the hands of the colonists and the Government.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOSPITALITY AND RESENTMENT—PRIMITIVE ART—AMPUTATION OF THE LITTLE FINGER—SORCERY.

PURSUING the narrative of the chief facts and incidents of interest which came under the observation of the first voyagers and colonists in relation to the aborigines, and which have been handed down either through the medium of writing or by common report, we come to an occurrence highly illustrative of the character of the New Hollander in his primitive state. During his exploration of the coast, undertaken a few weeks after the establishment of the settlement, the Governor, having called into Broken Bay, proceeded in a boat to land at a late hour in the evening. Owing to the partial darkness and to the shallow nature of the shore at the spot to which the boat had been steered, the party experienced considerable difficulty in disembarking, the boat repeatedly grounding at some distance from the land. A solitary aged aboriginal, who witnessed the unpleasant difficulties by which the whites were beset, stationing himself on an elevated rock, by shouts and signs indicated to the party the part of the coast on which they would find the water sufficiently deep to admit of the boat touching land. Having thus made his experience of these waters, acquired in his fishing expeditions in his bark canoe, available in extricating

the strangers from one unpleasant position, the old man offered his services to relieve them from another not less unpleasant, by conducting them to a cave, in which he gave them to understand they would all find shelter from a drenching rain which was falling at the time. Being unwilling, however, to encounter the obscure and unexplored depths of this primitive asylum, they declined to enter, whereupon their benefactor proceeded to collect a quantity of brambles, reeds, and grass, and made arrangements for the party spending the night on shore as comfortably as possible. Having rested till morning in the shelter of the gunyas hastily put together under the direction and with the assistance of the aboriginal, the party proceeded at daylight to examine the cave indicated to them on the previous evening, and which they found, as described, capable of giving shelter to a number of men, forming a roomy and comfortable chamber in the solid rock. The Governor then presented the old man, by whom they had been so kindly and hospitably received, with some trifling gifts, and the party proceeded on their voyage. A week or two after the same locality was visited by another party of excursionists, also under the command of the Governor. This time, also, the old man made his appearance on the beach, accompanied by his son, whom he introduced to Governor Phillip, having previously welcomed the party by a dance and a song, or, more properly, a "corroboree" on a small scale. The Europeans remaining in Broken

Bay all the day and night following their arrival, they a second time received abundantly the good offices of their old friend. The time had now arrived, however, when their intimacy and friendship were at once to be severed by a most unexpected and unpleasant occurrence. On the morning following the landing of the boat party, an axe, which was among their implements, was missed, and search being made among the aborigines, who were encamped round the place, it was found in the possession of the old man. It had always been an object with the authorities to impress upon the blacks the nature of the crime of theft, by immediately punishing every act of stealing, and as quickly rewarding all acts of honesty. This time Governor Phillip determined to make no exception to the rule, and, accordingly, approaching the offender, he inflicted with his open hand two or three severe slaps on the shoulder, at the same time pointing significantly to the pilfered axe, to give him to understand the cause of the punishment. The old New Hollander was not, however, to be chastised thus summarily with impunity; his manhood fired at the insult offered in the presence of a multitude of his own people and a crowd of strangers. Darting to where the arms of the tribe were deposited, and seizing a spear, he poised it aloft, and giving utterance to his resentment in the most fierce imprecations, and foaming with rage, was about to hurl the weapon at his assailant, when his arm was arrested by some of the more peaceably disposed of his com

panions. Thwarted thus in his meditated revenge, he departed in a sulky and angry mood, and did not again for some time make his appearance among the whites.

The indications of the presence of art among the aborigines have before been referred to. As, however, these indications have been observed in a marked degree among the tribes which are now more particularly treated of, it may not be out of place to recur to the subject. A primitive gallery of sculpture, discovered by voyagers on the northern coast of the country, has previously been minutely described. The existence of similar objects of curiosity in the neighbourhood of Port Jackson is mentioned in the journals of some of the early voyagers. They consist of carvings, executed with more or less skill on the smooth surface of large rocks—flint, shell, or bone principally forming the implement substituted for a chisel. The figures generally represented were animals, weapons of different descriptions, men in various attitudes, fish, and serpents. The writer has been given to understand that one of these sculptured rocks is at the present day to be seen on the shores of Port Jackson, in the neighbourhood of Middle Head. In the consideration of this point the mind is forcibly struck by one of those links which would seem to connect the aborigines of Australia with those of America, and which go so far to support the theory which claims a common origin for these people. The following passage from Catlin's "Travels among the North

American Indians" will at once show a similarity between the two nations in point of artistic performances :—

"I have been unable to find anything like a system of hieroglyphic writing among them ; yet their picture-writings on the rocks, and on their robes, approach somewhat towards it. Of the former I have seen a great many in the course of my travels ; and I have satisfied myself that they are generally the *totems* (symbolic names) merely of Indians who have visited these places, and, from a similar feeling of vanity that everywhere belongs to man much alike, have been in the habit of recording their names or symbols, such as birds, beasts, or reptiles, by which each family and each individual is generally known, as white men are in the habit of recording their names at watering-places."

Catlin's work contains, among other illustrations, a few plates representing these picture-writings, and the similarity between the works of the Indians and those of the New Hollanders, as shown in a representation before alluded to in these papers, is most remarkable. In point of skill and ingenuity no difference whatever is observable. There is something very remarkable and interesting in the consideration of this point of coincidence in two races of savage men, separated from each other by more than half the globe—the one people having attained one degree above the lowest level of barbarism—the other, so far as external appearances go, little removed from the lowest point to which it is possible for human nature to descend. While on this subject, another fact, suggestive of a variety of speculations, forcibly recurs to the mind. This is the discovery, made in the early part of the

last century, and familiar to every lover of antiquities and student of history, near Mount Sinai, in Arabia, of a place known as the "Written Mountain"—an accumulation of rocks, on the surfaces of which are delineated an immense number of figures and characters. When this place was first discovered, numberless were the conjectures, and extreme the interest, to which it gave rise in the learned and antiquarian world. Among other probable results anticipated as likely to spring from the deciphering of the characters, it was believed that they would throw additional light on the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea; and in order to satisfy the intense curiosity which prevailed, many of the European governments despatched learned men to examine the hieroglyphics, and, if possible, to construe them. Among those who proceeded on this mission was an English bishop, celebrated in his day for his knowledge in everything pertaining to the ancient world. After the expenditure of a considerable amount of attention and time, it was found that the characters belonged to several languages, in which the Arabic prevailed, and were, for the most part, names, emblematic figures, and short sentences, and the date assigned to the commencement of the novel writing was the sixth century. Now, the difference which is observable between the rock-writing found at Mount Sinai, and almost in the centre of the ancient nursery of civilization, and the same writing discovered on the river banks of North America or along the coast of New Holland, appears

to consist altogether in degree, being more or less perfect in proportion to the mechanical appliances employed, or the knowledge or ignorance of letters among the sculptors. In every other respect no difference is observable. The questions which naturally follow on these facts, and which present a fertile field for operation and research, are these: Is this writing on the rocks part and parcel of a system which prevailed among the primary inhabitants of the earth prior to the invention of scroll-writing or books, and hitherto overlooked or undiscovered by antiquarians, but preserved among the wild Arabs, Red Indians, and New Hollanders, after their separation from the parent stock, in lieu of a better system, to the present day? Or is it merely the simultaneous development of that desire for an after-life so universal among men, and which, while it actuates the civilized and refined to transmit to posterity their deeds and their names by means of elaborate and beautiful histories, would impel the Arab, the American Indian, and the aboriginal of New Holland to inscribe on the rough rock his name, his initials, or his emblematic symbol to rivet the attention of future generations and "form a lasting link of ages"

> "When his bones are dust, his grave a blank,
> His station, generation, even his nation,
> Become a thing, or nothing?"

Among the customs of the New Hollanders there is one in which, not less than in the foregoing, is to be traced a coincidence between them and the

aboriginal inhabitants of America. This custom consists in the amputation of the little finger of the left hand. Among the New Hollanders the operation is confined to the females, and is performed during the infant years, being technically called "malgun" by the Port Jackson blacks when first observed by the European settlers. The true meaning or origin of this mutilation has never been properly explained, although numerous conjectures have been hazarded on the point. Like many other customs, not alone among the aborigines of Australia, but among barbarous nations of a much higher standing, the cause or object of the practice is utterly forgotten or unknown among the tribes by whom it is practised; or, if known to some of the sages, is kept a secret with scrupulous care. A somewhat ostensible though not very erudite method of solving the mystery, discovered by some Europeans, consists in the supposition that the small finger of the left hand of all females was amputated for the purpose of affording greater facility in winding up the lines which the aboriginal women exclusively use in fishing, and which they coil up on the left hand when their labour is done. In this latter process no doubt the absence of the little finger, or a portion of it, may be an advantage; but that the advantage is the cause of the finger being removed is a supposition which closely approximates to absurdity. It would, moreover, be attributing to the New Hollander a degree of wanton cruelty which would be hardly credible, to

suppose that for so trifling a cause he would inflict such a torture and impose such a deformity on all the females of his tribe. Nothing can possibly afford a better clue for arriving at a just conclusion as to the probable meaning of the ceremony than an investigation of the practice among the North American Indians which has so strong a similitude to the one just mentioned. The ceremony among these last-named people, which is elaborately described by the author before quoted, is of a religious character, and is preceded by a process of torture of the worst possible description, at the termination of which the sufferer, as a last act of self-immolation, approaches a man appointed for the purpose, and placing his finger on the skull of a buffalo, it is chopped off at one stroke, the owner having previously offered it as a sacrifice to the Great Spirit. Among the Red Indians the operation appears to be confined to the men, and the loss of a finger, in the manner referred to, is regarded as a mark of the greatest distinction; nor are they in all instances content with the loss of one member, some warriors and chiefs, the more to bask in the favour of their Manitou, immolating at different times the first joint of several fingers: the greater the number missing the greater the reverence paid to the individual. Here then, most probably, is the true explanation of the practice among the New Hollanders which has been the cause of so much speculation. The amputation of the little finger of female children is—or was at a

remote period—intended as a sacrifice to a superior being, or as a propitiatory offering to the only spiritual being at present known to them—the spirit of evil; and the restriction of the ceremony to females may be explained by supposing that it is intended to counterbalance the loss of a front tooth among the male portion of the tribes, as before described. This may be the more readily believed as the knocking out of the tooth, which takes place at a mature age, is a much more painful operation than the excision of a joint of the finger when performed during infancy.

The practice of sorcery and incantations among the New Hollanders is attested by all who have had any degree of intercourse with them, being exhibited to travellers, on their first interviews with the aborigines, in a somewhat amusing manner. Thus, a party travelling in the far interior once came suddenly on a tribe of blacks who had never before been in close contact with Europeans. The latter, terrified at the appearance of the strangers with their horses, hastily collecting their gear, darted into the bush, in the depths of which they were soon effectually concealed and fortified. It being near evening the travellers prepared to encamp for the night, and having erected their tents and lighted their fires, were expending an hour in conversation previous to retiring to rest. Presently a slight rustling was heard among the surrounding brushwood, and the travellers, apprehensive of a hostile visit from the people whom they had previously so unceremoniously disturbed, grasped their arms,

but without moving from their position, and listening attentively and straining their eyes in the direction whence the noise had proceeded, soon perceived by the light of their fire, at the distance of some yards, the cause of their apprehensions. This was a very old black man, whom they had previously noticed among the retreating tribe, and who now appeared in a stooping attitude, his hands resting on his knees, staring through an opening in the trees at the scene before him. After having gazed for some time, and finding himself unmolested, he commenced a series of the most extraordinary contortions and gestures, accompanied by some unmusical sounds, by spitting, and every conceivable mode of giving effect to his necromancy, all of which appeared so ludicrous to the whites that, forgetting their possible danger, they at length gave vent to their mirth in loud laughter, which only grew louder as the old man, enraged at their mirth, redoubled his exertions to cast a spell round the party. Finding his enchantment powerless, after exhausting his entire stock of charms, and after expending his whole energy, the old man turned round, and with a peculiar mode of leave-taking, which only gave a climax to the uproarious mirth of the whites, darted into the bush to rejoin his companions. Leichhardt, in the journal of his first expedition, relates that, his party being one night quietly seated in their camp, a solitary black, mistaking their fire for that of his tribe, walked into the midst of them; and, terrified beyond all description

at finding himself among such strange beings, clambered with the speed of lightning to the summit of a neighbouring tree, and from this elevated position commenced a series of contortions and gestures, calling aloud in a doleful voice, spitting, and snorting, evidently intending thereby to dissipate the vision, or render powerless the superhuman visitants—for as such, no doubt, he regarded the explorers.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE "RISING" OF 1842–4.

THE simultaneous aggressive movement of the aborigines throughout the entire colony and along its boundaries, which commenced in 1842, and continued through the two or three succeeding years, belongs to the history of the country. For more than two years the warfare which the blacks waged upon the stations situate along the boundaries of the colony, from one extreme to the other, was universal, implacable, and incessant. So simultaneous, indeed, and so general was the movement that, did we not know from the habits and conditions of the blacks that such a thing would be impossible, a belief would be encouraged that the onslaught of the aborigines on the lives and property of the settlers was the result of a perfect organization, effected with all the aids of negotiation, secret intrigue, and general assemblies. From Wide Bay to Port Phillip the organization seemed to extend, and scarcely a day elapsed without tidings reaching the city of some remote station being driven in, some flock driven away or speared, some shepherd or hutkeeper being wounded or killed. To add to the horror excited in the minds of the people on the several stations by the alarming situation in which they found themselves placed, tribes of blacks who

had hitherto lived on the most peaceful or friendly terms with the whites became all at once transformed into their most bloodthirsty enemies, while other tribes, hitherto unknown or unheard of within the limits of the colony, came in from the wilderness to join in the war which their brethren were waging.

Many and various were the opinions entertained and expressed at the time in reference to the cause of the outbreak of the aboriginal race, and the violent warfare carried on on the frontiers of the colony with spear and musket was followed by no less violent war of words among those in Sydney and elsewhere whose interests, duties, or sympathies led them to take an interest in the contest. The settlers and their friends openly attributed the blame to the "Protectorate of the Aborigines," established in 1838, the object of which was to rescue the aboriginal tribes from the misery in which their association with the colonists had plunged them, and to save them from that extermination which threatened the entire race. The residents in the interior attributed the outbreak of the blacks to a misconception on their part of the functions of the Protectors, many of whom they also alleged were unfit for the offices to which they had been appointed. They received their appointments in England, whence they directly came, and coming into the colony unimpressed with those feelings of dread and resentment which the occasional depredations of the blacks had excited in the minds of the great bulk of the colonists, it is more than probable that they

entered on the performance of their functions biassed in some degree in favour of the aborigines, with whose sufferings they had previously been made familiar. The settlers alleged, moreover, that the conduct of the Protectors was such as to impress the blacks with the belief that they were to be saved from violence under all and every circumstance, and that a feeling had sprung up among them that from some mysterious cause they were thenceforward especial objects of care with the King of Great Britain, whose name, it is said, they became accustomed to mention with familiarity as their patron and friend. The Protectors among their other functions, were empowered to act as magistrates in all cases in which the aborigines were concerned, and it is alleged that in their decisions a strong leaning towards the aborigines was always evinced. This partiality became the subject of conversation in every hut, and on every station. The civilized blacks soon gleaned from the discourses of the shepherds and hutkeepers the facts of the matter, and with that shrewdness in which they are by no means deficient, they perceived that the tide had turned in their favour. The blacks resident on the stations transmitted the welcome intelligence to their wilder brethren; these communicated it to their neighbours, and those again despatched the news to the remotest tribes. Then followed the general onslaught on the Europeans along the entire border of the colony. These were the views of the colonists whose interests were involved in the matter, and that

they were not altogether groundless is shown by a passage which occurs in a despatch of Sir George Gipps, dated in May, 1842, to Earl Grey, then Secretary for the Colonies. It is as follows:—"It would be difficult, I think, to find men less equal to the arduous duty of acting as Protectors of the aborigines than those who were selected for the purpose in England in 1838. Their course has been, from the beginning, one of feeble action and puling complaint. Possessing the power to command the respect of the settlers, they have failed to make themselves respected, and I greatly fear that their measures have tended rather to increase than to allay the irritation which has long existed between the two races."

The Protectors, on the other hand, and the friends of the aborigines in general, maintained that the outbreak of the blacks was nothing more than the explosion of long-pent feelings of revenge and hatred towards the whites, resulting from a long course of violence and injustice on the part of the latter towards them. A large amount of evidence in support of this view of the matter is found in some official papers in reference to the aborigines printed and laid on the table of the Legislative Council in October, 1843, on the motion of one of the members. The papers consist in a great degree of letters and reports to the officers of the Government from the Protectors and the missionaries then engaged throughout the country in endeavouring to Christianize the blacks. Several

of these documents were published in the journals of the day, and to every impartial mind the disclosures which they make in reference to the atrocities which had been for some time committed against the aborigines afford a satisfactory elucidation of the causes which led to the retaliatory warfare which the latter subsequently waged. An Assistant-Protector thus writes to Mr. Robinson, the chief of the Protectorate :—"On the 9th March (1841) I proceeded to the Pyrenees (Victoria) to investigate the circumstances connected with the slaughter of several aborigines by a Mr. F——. On the 9th and 10th I fell in with several parties of natives. From one of these I obtained some distressing statements as to the slaughter of the blacks. They gave me the names of seven individuals shot by Mr. F—— within the last six months. I found, however, no legal evidence attainable." The Chief Protector himself writes, in reference to the Port Phillip blacks :—"The aboriginal natives of Portland Bay and Western Port districts are rapidly decreasing. Appalling collisions have already happened between the white and aboriginal inhabitants ; and, although instances may have transpired where natives have been the aggressors, yet it will be found that the majority originated with Europeans. The aboriginal natives known to have been destroyed are many ; and if the testimony of natives be admissible, the amount would be great indeed." An Assistant-Protector, writing under date 26th February, 1842, says :—"I have the

honour to report that, on the afternoon of the 24th, two aboriginal natives, whose names I transmit, returned to this encampment, which they had left with their families on the 22nd, and reported that late on the previous evening, while they, with their wives, two other females, and two children were asleep at a ti-tree scrub called One-one-derang, a party of eight white people, on horseback, surrounded them, dismounted, and fired upon them with pistols. That three women and a child had been thus killed, and the other female so severely wounded as to be unable to stand, or to be removed by them. They had saved themselves and the child named Unibicquiang by flight, who was brought to this place upon their shoulders." The report proceeds to state that on the following morning the writer proceeded to the spot indicated, and found the dead bodies of three women and a child killed by gun-shot, and a fourth woman dangerously wounded, as described by the men. In the report of another Assistant-Protector, Mr. Parker, the names of 43 aboriginals murdered by whites in one of the northern districts, from 1838 till 1841, were given. The superintendent of the Wesleyan Mission to the aborigines, the Rev. Mr. Hirst, writes: —"There is something peculiar in the case of the Tantgort tribe. Two years ago this tribe was a numerous one, but nearly the whole of the fighting men have been butchered in cold blood by Europeans, so that they are so far reduced as to be unable to defend themselves against the inroads of the neigh-

bouring tribes." Another annihilating process is thus described by Chief-Protector Robinson:—"T—— was overseer of a station in the Western District, and was notorious for killing natives. No legal evidence could be obtained against this nefarious individual. In the course of my inquiries in my late expedition I found a tribe, a section of the Jarcourts, totally extinct, and it was affirmed by the natives that T—— had destroyed them. The tribes are rapidly diminishing. The Colijans, once a numerous and powerful people, inhabiting the fertile region of Lake Colac, are now reduced, all ages and sexes, to under 40, and these are still on the decay. The Jarcourts, inhabiting the country to the west of the great Lake Carangermite, once a very numerous and powerful people, are now reduced to under 60." The Rev. Mr. Handt, one of the clergymen attached to the German mission in the Moreton Bay district, writes:—"The aborigines have been on the decrease during the past year. Several fights have taken place among them; but this is not the chief cause of this circumstance, as their fights bear rather the character of warlike games, in which seldom more than one, and frequently none at all, is killed, but merely some wounded. One of the principal causes of their decrease is the diseases to which they are subject. I am sorry to state that where the Europeans have established cattle and sheep stations here, some hostilities have taken place between the aborigines and the settlers, in which some on both sides have lost their lives."

Another letter in the same collection speaks of a plan recently proposed for attaching the aboriginals to the several stations throughout the country, as a means of bringing them within the influences of civilization. The writer deprecates the proposal, as certain, if carried out, of being the source of incalculable evil to the entire people, and as likely, in a comparatively short period, to lead to their annihilation, grounding his repugnance to the suggestion on the fact that it was not alone the shepherds and hutkeepers who were the destroyers of the unhappy race, but many of those in a much higher grade of society.

Thus, whatever truth may be in the charges made against the Protectorate and the authorities, it is evident from the facts adduced in the State documents just quoted, that the aborigines had, for a series of years, received sufficient provocation to explain the causes of the attitude of simultaneous hostility which they so suddenly assumed. All the early writers in reference to the colony represent the aboriginal natives as a peaceably-disposed, tractable, and unobtrusive people, seeking in general rather to preserve their old haunts inviolate, and to follow their old pursuits, than to trespass upon the possessions or property of the new-comers. There is no reason whatever for believing that they had subsequently, at the period now in question, so far changed their nature as to assume all at once a sanguinary and implacable disposition towards the colonists, had they not been goaded by the injustice and violence

of those from whom they were entitled to expect nothing but the most considerate treatment. The very fact of all the atrocities quoted above having been committed previous to the year 1842 is sufficient evidence in proof of this assumption. But a further proof is found in the fact that previous to that time nothing like combined or general hostility towards the Europeans had shown itself among the aborigines. Sometimes, indeed, a bullock was speared, or a half-dozen sheep were driven off, but even these acts of aggression were never resorted to till the tribes had been utterly deprived of their ordinary means of sustenance by the encroachments of colonization; and there is every reason for believing that for years some of the settlers and their servants had been accustomed to punish such offences in a summary and murderous manner when the offenders were detected.

Of the extent of the depredations committed on the settlers, their men and property, during the border warfare of 1842-4, no comprehensive statistical account is available. Some idea may, however, be formed of the loss of life and property throughout the colony by showing, from a Parliamentary paper of 1844, what the losses were during a very brief period in a small district. The paper in question is quoted in an excellent little work entitled "Recollections of Sixteen Years' Labour in the Australian Backwoods," published in London in 1847, and it thus enumerates the outrages and depredations committed by the blacks in the neighbourhood of Port Fairy during two

months in the early part of 1842:—Man killed, 100 sheep taken, and hut robbed of everything it contained, including a double-barrelled gun, with ammunition; 300 sheep and 100 tons of potatoes destroyed; five horses taken and several head of cattle killed; eighty-nine calves killed or driven off; two men wounded—the station attacked four times. Six hundred sheep taken, of which 130 were recovered; hut robbed, and two double-barrelled guns taken; ten cows and forty calves killed; hut attacked several times, and man severely wounded. Three flocks attacked simultaneously, one of which was taken away, and the shepherd desperately wounded; the major part eventually recovered. Man taken, but rescued. Two hundred sheep taken, and shepherd speared. A shepherd fired at. Four horses taken, station and flock of sheep attacked, and shepherd dreadfully wounded. Two horses killed, hut robbed, and men driven off the station. A shepherd killed—found with a spear through his heart. One horse and 330 sheep taken, and man wounded. Six hundred and ten sheep taken, and man killed. Seven hundred sheep taken, but mostly recovered. One hundred and eighty sheep taken, station attacked and robbed, and hutkeeper severely wounded. A very valuable bull killed, and a number of calves. Six cows, three bullocks, twenty calves, 800 ewes and lambs driven off, and man killed.

Here we have a list of four men killed and eight wounded within the brief period of two

months in one small district, besides an immense destruction or carrying away of property; but the particulars thus given exhibit only one instance of the results which followed in almost every district of the colony.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MYALL CREEK MASSACRE.

THE outbreak mentioned in the foregoing chapters of this book was but the climax to a state of things which had continued, in a mitigated degree, for some years previously. The event which is now to be described was, in fact, an occurrence in what may be termed a previous outbreak of the whites. For a considerable period the settlers in the remote districts had suffered to some extent from the depredations occasionally committed by the blacks, when the latter, driven by necessity, assailed the flocks and herds of the former, for the purpose of obtaining the ordinary means of subsistence. In the encounters which resulted from these depredations lives were sometimes sacrificed, and not unfrequently shepherds, hutkeepers, and stockmen paid with their existence their fidelity to the interests of their employers or masters. This course of events could not long continue to progress unchecked. The evils which the settlers suffered, and which every resident in the interior more or less felt, were too severe for endurance, much less were the men who at that period formed the bulk of the country population likely to remain passive spectators while their companions and neighbours were slaughtered and their property destroyed, no matter under what circumstances. The

instinct of self-preservation gave rise to a general feeling on the part of the Europeans that something must be done to show the aborigines that they acted at once contrary to good policy and contrary to European law in assailing the lives and properties of the colonists—that they were assailing those who possessed the power to retaliate in a fearful manner. Accordingly, after the settlers had recovered from the panic into which they had been thrown by the first attacks which they sustained, a general system of armed defence, which sometimes proceeded as far as retaliation and aggression, was adopted.

It may be mentioned here that, in pursuance of the requirements of the Protectorate established in 1839, many of the settlers and squatters deprived their men of all firearms and other weapons which might be used in an offensive manner against the aborigines. Nothing, it was alleged by the partizans of the settlers, could have been more unwise than this course. The shepherd and others, finding themselves completely at the mercy of their enemies the blacks, became more fearful of them, and, as a natural consequence of their fear, contracted an inveterate hatred towards the entire race. On the other hand, the knowledge of the disarmament of the men at the stations, which soon spread throughout the interior, rendered the aborigines more audacious in their depredations. The result was that the Europeans, deprived of the ordinary means of resistance, had recourse even to extraordinary means of retaliation

and resentment. Some poisonous drugs, used in the treatment of diseases among sheep and cattle, were mixed in the flour of "dampers," and these being divided among the more troublesome or more ferocious of the hostile or suspected tribes, produced in a more quiet manner the same fatal results as powder and ball. This latter mode of proceeding has been strongly denied on the part of the settlers and their men, and as strongly re-asserted on behalf of the aborigines. To an unbiassed mind, however, the charge does not appear by any means unfounded or improbable, when it is considered to what a height the evil passions of the whites had been excited by the aggressions of the aborigines and by the deprivation of those arms by which alone they could hope to defend themselves in open and fair fight.

Be the truth of these matters as it may, it is certain that the settlers and their servants, at length driven to extreme courses by the dread under which they lived, and by the sanguinary attacks which they sometimes had to sustain, resolved to take the most effectual course for putting an end to the evils which they endured, and, arming themselves as best they could, formed parties of offence and defence. An expedition made by one of these parties, which ended in the "Myall Creek massacre," it is which is now to be described. Myall Creek is situated in the Hunter River district, and the transaction in question took place in 1839. The circumstances of the case are briefly these: A number of stockmen and shepherds

in the district, being enraged at some depredations committed among the cattle and sheep for which they were held responsible, sallied out in force, and coming on an obnoxious tribe at their camping place, on a squatter's station, seized the entire body, and marching them to a lonely spot, put them all to death, under circumstances of most appalling atrocity. The magistrates in the district, being made aware of the circumstances, had the men supposed to be implicated arrested and sent to Sydney, where, on a second trial, having been previously acquitted, they were, seven in number, found guilty of murder, and executed. The following evidence, adduced on one of the trials which took place in Sydney, contains the chief particulars of the transaction, which was marked by such terrible consequences :—

"George A—— deposed : I am assigned servant to Mr. D—— ; I was at his station at Myall Creek as hutkeeper in June ; Mr. H——, who lives there as superintendent, left home to go to the Big River in the beginning of June ; when he left there were some native blacks there ; I have said there were twenty, and I am sure there were that number and upwards ; I would not swear there were not forty. While master was away, some men came on a Saturday, about ten ; I cannot say how many days after master left ; they came on horseback, all armed with muskets, swords, and pistols ; I was at home when they came, with the stock-keeper ; I was sitting with Kilmeister, the stock-keeper, in the hut ; I saw them coming up ; they

came up galloping, with guns and pistols pointing towards the hut; I did not attend to what they said; they were talking to Kilmeister outside. I know Russell, Salouse, Foley, Johnstone, Hawkins, Kilmeister, Palliser, Lamb, and Oates; Blake and Parry I do not know; about ten came up to the hut, as near as I could tell; I will not swear Parry was not of the number, but I did not see him; I never saw any of them before then except Kilmeister; I cannot say which came up first; they were all spread about. The blacks were all encamped, ready for the night; they were not more than two yards from the hut; this was about an hour and a half before sundown; there were plenty of women and children amongst the blacks. The blacks, when they saw the men coming, ran into our hut, and the men then, all of them, got off their horses, and Russell had a rope which goes round a horse's neck, and began to undo it, whilst the blacks were in the hut. While he was undoing it, I asked what they were going to do with the blacks, and Russell said, 'We are going to take them over the back of the range, to frighten them;' Russell and some one or two went in; I only took notice of Russell going in while the blacks were in; I remained outside; one of them remained in; I heard the crying of the blacks for relief or assistance to me and Kilmeister; they were moaning, the same as a mother and children would cry; there were small things that could not walk; there were a good many small boys and girls; after they were tied, I saw

Russell bring the end of the rope out they were tied with, and give it to one of the men on horseback ; the party then went away with the blacks ; the man who took the rope from Russell went in front, and the others behind ; all the blacks were tied fast together with the rope ; they were tied by the hands, and one blackfellow had on a pair of handcuffs ; the rope with which they were fastened was a very long tether rope for horses in a field ; they brought out the whole, except two, who made their escape when the men were coming up ; they were two little boys, and they jumped into the creek close to the hut ; there was no water in it, and they escaped at a dry part ; one black gin they left with me in the hut ; they left her because she was good-looking ; they said so ; another black gin they left that was with Davy, another blackfellow who was with me ; there was a little child at the back of the hut, when they were tying the party, and when the blacks and party were going away, this little child, as I thought, was going to follow the party with its mother, but I took hold of it, and put it into the hut, and stopped it from going ; I had two little boys, the small child, two gins, and Davy and Billy ; they all went away except these ; the child was going after its mother. There was an old man named Daddy, the oldest of the lot ; he was called Old Daddy ; he was an old, big, tall man ; this Daddy, and another old man named Joey, they never tied along with the rest ; they were crying, and did not want to go ; they made no resistance. Some of the children were not tied ;

others were; they followed the rest that were tied; the small ones, two or three, were not able to walk; the women carried them on their backs in opossum skins; the small children were not tied that followed the mob; they were all crying in and out of the hut till they got out of my hearing; they went up towards the west from the hut, the road way. Kilmeister got his horse ready, after he had done talking to them, and just before they were going to start; he went with them on horseback, and took the pistol with him; he was talking to them five or ten minutes; I did not take notice what he said; I was frightened; I did not pay any attention to what they were talking about. Oates had a pistol; I know Foley; he had a pistol in his hand, standing at the door, while the blacks were inside; I did not take any notice of swords and pistols at first; at a distance, when they were galloping up, I saw swords and pistols; they were not in sight above a minute or so after they went away; in about a quarter of an hour, or twenty minutes at the outside, I heard the report of two pieces, one after the other; the reports came from the same direction they went; the second was quite plain for anyone to hear; I only heard two; I did not hear anything else but these two shots; it was just before sundown. Next night after the same men came back to the hut where they took the blacks from; they were all together of a lump, except Kilmeister, who was left behind; one of the party gave me Kilmeister's saddle off his horse, and I asked him

where Kilmeister was; he came in about twenty minutes after; they stopped all night; I and Kilmeister slept together in one berth; the rest all slept in the hut; they were talking; I cannot recollect what they said; next morning three of them, after they had breakfast, took firesticks out of the hut—Russell, Fleming, and Kilmeister; before they took the firesticks Fleming told Kilmeister to bring the leg-rope with him that ropes the cows; Kilmeister asked me for the leg-rope, and I gave it to him, and they went in the direction that they took the blacks; one of the men was left behind, and all the rest went with those who had the firesticks; one was left with me as guard, named Foley; while they were away Foley and I were in the hut together and the rest away; during the time they were away I asked Foley if any of the blacks had made their escape; he said none that he saw; he said all were killed except one black gin; before the party came back Foley drew one of the swords out of the case and showed it to me; it was all over blood; during that time Davy and Billy came to the hut; in about an hour the other man came back to the hut; I saw smoke in the same direction they went; this was soon after they went with the firesticks; I do not recollect what they said when they came back; they got upon their horses, and Fleming told Kilmeister to go up by-and-by and put the logs of wood together, and be sure that all were consumed; I do not recollect his saying anything; some of them were in

the hut and must have heard it. Kilmeister, directly after the party went from the station, went in the same direction, and brought back the horse he had left behind. The smoke was up from the creek—up the ranges; never went to the place; I did not like to go; Davy went, and he came back; Kilmeister was away in the middle of the day; he said the horse was knocked up and not able to walk; I saw him; he could catch him anywhere. I saw the smoke pretty well all day; at first there was a great smoke; in the after part of the day there was not much. I was there when Mr. D—— came. Kilmeister was at home when the police were coming; in the morning after they went away a piece of a broken sword was found; I saw no blood on it; it did not belong to my station. When the police came Kilmeister was at home, and said, 'For God's sake mind what you say, and not say I went with them, but in a quarter of an hour after them.' They brought back no black gin they saved; the gins they left, and the two boys and the child, I sent away with ten blackfellows who went away in the morning; the same evening the ten blackfellows came back, whom Foster had taken away in the morning, and I turned them (five) away along with those ten; I sent them away as I did not like to keep them, as the men might come back and kill them."

Whatever cause of complaint the settlers may have had, and however much may be conceded to them on the ground of provocation, here is a circumstance,

described with a most painful certainty, which puts the Europeans completely "out of court" in respect of their treatment of the aborigines at the period in question. Why, the destruction of all the pastoral wealth of the entire colony would not afford sufficient justification for the unparalleled, the unnatural act of inhumanity detailed above by a Christian witness on his oath! The histories of conquests and of warfares —the wars of sects and the wars of races—furnish instances of atrocity and of cruelty in abundance; but it would be very difficult indeed to find any deed in the history of warfare surpassing in atrocity the Myall Creek massacre. "I heard the crying of the blacks for relief or assistance; they were moaning the same as a mother and children would cry; there were small things that could not walk. . . . There was an old man named Daddy, the oldest of the lot; he was an old, big, tall man; this Daddy, and another old man named Joey, they never tied along with the rest; *they were crying, and did not want to go; they made no resistance.* . . . The small ones, two or three, were not able to walk; the women carried them on their backs in opossum skins." Such are a few of the expressions occurring throughout this dismal detail, which suggest the frightful nature of the entire transaction, and the fiendish spirit of the times. Again, "I saw smoke in the same direction they went." That smoke contained the "voice of a brother's blood, which cried to heaven from the earth," and it is a glorious consolation to know that even

then it did not cry in vain—that even when such a fratricide was committed there, there was a power which could and dared avenge it. It is consoling, in fine, to know that this country has not now to atone for such an atrocious deed.

It has been said that the execution of the culprits had the effect of making the aborigines throughout the colony more audacious. But should it not rather be inferred that the hostility on their part which followed was the result of the supposed inadequacy of the punishment—allowing that the legal proceedings and their consequence were understood by the aboriginal tribes? Is it not more probable that the aborigines throughout the colony, learning from various sources the nature and extent of the terrible onslaught made on their brethren, were, in their subsequent hostility, rather actuated by a desire to revenge their death than encouraged by the punishment of their slayers to aggravated deeds of violence?

It was alleged, on the part of the settlers, at the period in question, that the police protection of the colony was insufficient, and that, therefore, the Europeans were entitled to take the law into their own hands. Indeed, the doctrine was seriously laid down by the most influential journal in the colony, in 1839, that, as matters then stood, the slayers of the blacks could not be held responsible. "If," said the *Sydney Gazette*, in December of the above year, "the police force may be insufficient for the due protection of property necessarily exposed to the incursions of

the savages, the Government may expect that the law of nature will supersede the statute law; and if lives are sacrificed in the collision, we cannot see by what principle of justice the slayer of his assailant can be held accountable." It can readily be conceived that such sentiments as these, circulating throughout the country, and misconstrued, or imperfectly understood, by those who were ready to seize on the slightest pretext for committing violence, must have been productive of the worst consequences. Whatever of justice or reason, moreover, may appear at first sight to be contained in such doctrines, at once disappears when the other side of the question is glanced at. In an official report on the police of the colony, published also in December, 1839, a gentleman holding a high official appointment states, in evidence, that for a considerable time previously the blacks had been "hunted and fired at like native dogs" by the Europeans at the distant stations. The report further shows that not only were the aboriginal tribes reduced to extreme famine by the encroachments of the colonists on their hunting grounds, and by the extinction of those animals on which they had previously subsisted, but they were utterly debarred from the only other source of subsistence to which they could resort without infringing on the property of the whites—namely, the fish to be found in the rivers and lagoons. For it appears it had become a settled understanding that whenever the aboriginals appeared in the neighbourhood of a river or creek,

they were to be fired at as though they were beasts of prey, the obvious reason being that these places were the favourite resorts of the flocks and herds of the settlers. So much had the blacks felt the hardship of this exclusion that, when by the regulations of the Protectorate the right to frequent the localities where fresh water was to be found was restored to them, their joy and gratitude knew no bounds. Thus the conclusion forces itself on every unbiassed mind that, whatever of natural right the aborigines might have had on their side in their occasional acts of aggression, the Europeans were justified by no law in resorting in retaliation to a war of extermination, or to those extreme acts of vengeance which appear to have been of frequent occurrence.

In a discussion which took place in the Legislative Council on the 23rd August, 1840, in which the right of the blacks to frequent the water-holes and rivers was discussed, the late Bishop of Sydney, Dr. Broughton, not only maintained that the blacks had a superior claim to the possession of those natural reservoirs, which were so necessary to their sustenance, but held that they were justified in defending them against the inroads of the whites and their flocks and herds. And no one can deny that the arguments of the Bishop were founded on the immutable principles of right and justice. The following were his words:—"The aboriginal natives of the colony, as far as they choose to use it, have an equal, nay, a superior, right to the white men, to subdue

and replenish the soil ; and anyone who goes among the aborigines and interferes with their natural right of procuring the necessaries of existence is an aggressor, and whatever proceedings may arise out of those acts are chargeable upon him who first gave the provocation. I entertain a hope that one benefit resulting from this discussion will be that we shall never again hear a whisper of the question whether men or animals are to be preserved."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE COO-EE—NUMBERS OF THE ABORIGINES.

AMONG the distinguishing peculiarities of nations, in all times, the war-song, or national shout, has occupied a pre-eminent position. Thus, the pæan of the Greeks, the *ululatus* of the Romans, the huzza of the British, the *viva* of the French, and the *Allah* of the Turks, are almost as much associated with those several nations as their language itself, of which, no doubt, the words form a part, but a very distinctive part. Even the Russians, whose vocabulary, like their civilization, is yet in course of formation, have adopted the "hurrah," so long in vogue among some of the Western nations, and intend to make it their own, as it appears by some recent despatches of their generals from the seat of war on the Danube. The distinctive cry of nations will, in general, be found, like their language, to be indicative of their character and habits. Originally, perhaps, they were the simultaneous outburst of passion or enthusiasm; the first uncouth and wild expression used being softened down and rendered more musical as language was improved, and as men became more polished. Thus the "huzza" of the modern British soldier bears no comparison with the old war-shouts of the Highlanders, the Welsh, and

the Irish. In proof of this many truthful historians assert that the terrible farrahs and other shouts used by the latter in former times frequently proved more efficacious, by means of the terror which they inspired, in repulsing an enemy than even the lances and skeans of the kerns. If a peculiar shout, then, be a necessary appanage of every people, why should not the New Hollander have his? Accordingly he has his shout to distinguish him among "contemporaries," and one which will bear comparison with those of most of the more pretending families of mankind. The "coo-ee" of the Australian aboriginal is much more musical, and to the full as expressive as the ejaculations which many of the European nations use for the purpose of calling a comrade, saluting a friend, or bidding defiance to an enemy. Nor, indeed, is it much less celebrated at the present day than many of those, for throughout the interior of the country the coo-ee has been adopted almost universally by the whites, and many a traveller who has lost his way in the depths of the wood, or become benighted in a lonely spot, has regained the beaten track, or been introduced to a hospitable fireside by the assistance of the well-known sound; and an age hence, when some Australian lexicographer shall compile a dictionary for the use of his countrymen, "coo-ee" will, doubtless, be one of the words with which he will enrich and fertilize the English language. Even the streets of the great metropolis of Britain have resounded with the sounds of the coo-ee; and the

way it came to pass, as recorded by general report and colonial tradition, was this :—A colonist, who, probably, had accumulated a fortune in the far interior of New South Wales by wholesaling and retailing slops, tobacco, grog, and other necessaries and luxuries to the settlers, shepherds, and blacks, and had returned to England to expend a portion of his wealth among the scenes of his youth, was passing through one of the most populous streets of the city in company with his wife. Unaccustomed to perambulating in crowded thoroughfares, the good lady unwittingly strayed from the side of her husband. The latter, on missing his charge, ran anxiously about for some minutes to seek her out, and, failing in his search, jumped on to the elevated footway of a neighbouring bridge, and, with instinctive forethought, "coo-eed" most lustily, to the utter bewilderment of gazing Londoners. Nor was the surprise of the spectators in any way diminished when their ears were greeted with the repetition of the outlandish sound from a distant part of the street, where the lost wife, catching the familiar notes, responded in shrill treble to the reverberating tenor of her lord.

Even among those who have been long familiar with the call of the Australian forests, it may not be generally known that in one particular it bears the palm from all other known intonations. This peculiar excellence consists in its adaptation for conveying the voice to a distance. It is pretty well ascertained by those competent to decide on the

question, that the coo-ee will be heard at a greater distance than any other sound which the human voice articulates—a fact which, in whatever light regarded, must be taken as some evidence of a keen perception, or intuitive sense of the perfect, being the gift of those with whom the word and sound originated.

The next point to be considered in connection with the coo-ee is its history—its origin and application. The origin of the coo-ee is readily guessed. The first thing which would suggest itself to the first aboriginal immigrants, previous to setting out from the northern coast, where they first landed, was the necessity of having some shout whereby they would be enabled mutually to hold converse amid the depths of the forest which extended before them. Whether the coo-ee was then for the first time invented, or whether the note was an importation which the first voyagers carried with them from the shores of Southern India ; whether, in fine, the sound was that first adopted and used, or whether it was discovered at a subsequent period during the migrations of the tribes, it is impossible to say and of little consequence to know. Suffice it that the coo-ee was, when Australia was first discovered, and is at the present day, universally used by the aborigines from one extreme of the country to the other.

Although it is certain that the chief purpose to which the coo-ee is applied by the aborigines, as well as by the Europeans, is that of maintaining a running correspondence when the tribes are engaged in

hunting excursions, calling together the dispersed members of the same families, or regaining the haunts of men when an individual or a party may have lost the beaten path or strayed into the depths of the primeval forest, far from village or hut, still it must not be imagined that to those commonplace uses alone is the coo-ee applied. It has already been shown that some of the most deadly encounters which have taken place between the aborigines and the Europeans originated in the usurpation by the latter of the freshwater streams, creeks, and lagoons of the former. The banks of the rivers and other freshwater reservoirs were, to all intents, the homes of the aborigines, and accordingly these places they defended with that tenacity and boldness which attachment to home could alone inspire ; and it has been observed by various explorers and travellers that tribes of blacks, otherwise frank and hospitable in their intercourse with the whites, have evinced considerable coolness and a lurking hostility whenever a body of the latter have approached suddenly or unceremoniously the banks of a creek. On these occasions it has not unfrequently happened that the whole tribe, with the exception of a patriarch who would come forward to hold parley, have remained seated close to the water, each individual preserving a sullen silence and keeping his weapons within reach of his hand, while the women and children would remain motionless at a short distance behind. Now, a jealousy of any encroachment on their water

reserves, and a determination at all hazards to preserve them intact, are here manifested ; but had it been known to the early settlers, or even to the European new-comer of later days, that the rules of aboriginal good manners forbade any individual or party to approach uninvited a watering-place in the possession of any tribe, the demeanour of the blacks on those occasions referred to would have prevented wonder, and might have saved many a fierce encounter. Yet such was and is the case. The coo-ee is not only used as a call, but is employed as a salutation or a warning ; and thus when a tribe, in its migratory wanderings, approaches a lagoon, it is the invariable practice among the blacks to despatch one of their number in advance, who, standing at a distance from the water, "coo-ees" at the top of his voice. If the banks of the pool are already in the possession of a tribe the coo-ee is answered, and the approaching tribe, halting at some distance, never attempt to approach till invited by the pre-occupants of the place. Thus the coo-ee is to the New Hollander a most valuable and necessary auxiliary in all his enterprises and daily pursuits—his friend in the hour of peril, as it calls his companions to his side, or enables him to rejoin their society ; his valuable auxiliary in his great enterprises, as by its aid every member of a family party or tribe are assembled at a moment's notice for council or for war ; and, lastly, in his conventional usages, his note of salutation, enabling him to preserve that ceremonious and

respectful demeanour in his relations towards his fellow-men which is the best safeguard against hatred and deadly strife.

In seeking to fix the numerical amount of the aboriginal population of New Holland, as a matter of course approximation alone can be aimed at with any prospect of success. Notwithstanding, however, that no complete or well-sustained statistical information with regard to the aborigines has ever existed, sufficient data is available to enable their numbers to be fixed with a tolerable degree of accuracy. As our facts and figures are founded principally on the ascertained condition of the blacks in those districts where they have but little or no intercourse with Europeans, it will be more satisfactory and will involve less difficulty if we fix the period of our census about the time of the first colonization of Australia. Commencing with New South Wales, it has already been shown that the aboriginal population of the district included between Port Jackson and Broken Bay amounted, at the time of the arrival of the first colonizing expedition, to 1,500 souls. Now, although the country which formed the possessions of this population possessed some natural advantages, which would be certain to attract and retain a considerable number of inhabitants, yet in most respects it was not more favoured than other parts of the colony. Although the facilities for salt-water fishing were great, fresh water was scarce, and the soil comparatively barren. Here was no great

river nor wide-spreading verdant plain, such as stud the vast interior, to render game abundant, or afford a promising hunting-ground, or develop an abundance of esculent roots. Thus it is apparent that if the aboriginal tribes spread over the entire colony did not exceed in numerical ratio those contained within the scope of country in question, they were not much deficient in this respect. An official, who had charge of a missionary station at Port Macquarie in 1840, speaks of the aboriginal population in that district as having been numbered at one time by thousands. If, in addition to these data, we take the testimony of various travellers, so often adduced in these papers, to the frequency with which tribes of blacks were met with throughout the colony; if, more particularly, we reflect on the numbers of aborigines which must have been engaged throughout the colony in the disturbances of 1841-2, in order to produce the results previously described; and if we consider that the tribes of Moreton Bay at the present day possess sufficient numerical strength, as well as sufficient daring, to offer very effective resistance to the progress of colonization, the conclusion becomes inevitable that the entire population of the present colony of New South Wales could not, at the period of the first settlement of Australia, have been less than 50,000. Proceeding to Port Phillip, our data become still more satisfactory. A gentleman who has been for several years connected with the Protectorate of Aborigines in that colony recently stated in public

that in 1843 he found, as the result of an imperfect census, that the aboriginal population of the district of which he then had charge was 1,000, and expressed his belief, founded on extensive experience, that at the period of the foundation of the colony the number of the aborigines in the same district was not less than 8,000. From recent reports of the Protectors throughout the colony we find the present aboriginal population of the Portland Bay District, which is one of the chief centres of the European population, set down at 700 souls; of the Western Port District, 300; of the Wimmera District, 1,200; of the District of Grant, 70. These numbers, although only a fraction of the entire colony is embraced in the census, show a total of considerably more than 2,000. Now, taking this as the present population of a small section of the colony, and placing the fact thus arrived at in conjunction with the opinion of one well informed in these matters, that the population of another district of Port Phillip was originally 8,000, we are enabled, by a glance at the geographical features of the colony, which includes the great stronghold of the aborigines on the southern coast, Gippsland, to arrive at an estimate of the entire population. That population could not have been numerically much less than that fixed upon for New South Wales. Proceeding to South Australia, we have the testimony of Captain Sturt that, in the course of his explorations, his party once met with a concourse of aborigines numbering 600, nearly all

of whom were full-grown men, while he described a native village which was met with at another place during the course of his travels as numbering seventy substantially-constructed huts, each of which was capable of accommodating fifteen persons; and in the entire progress of the expedition large tribes were continually met with. In the young colony of Western Australia, where colonization has yet made but comparatively small progress, all accounts tend to show that the aboriginal population is at the present day so numerous that they still divide the mastery of the country with the colonists. The most recent accounts, while they speak of the old settlements as the biding-places of large numbers of aborigines, set forth that there was considerable danger that many of the more remote stations and villages would have to be abandoned, in consequence of the hostility of the numerous tribes who inhabit the borders of the colony. Advancing to the north, the only information which we possess is that derived from the explorations of Leichhardt through the interior, and the surveys of Stokes and others on the coast. The former, in the journal of his first expedition, speaks of meeting with tribes of aboriginals almost throughout the entire course of his travels, and where the tribes themselves were not visible, traces of their wanderings, as the tracks of their camp-fires, the remains of their mia-mias, burying-places, utensils, and weapons were almost continually observable. Stokes, on the other hand,

describes huts of a very superior character, bearing a stronger resemblance to the wigwams of the North American Indians than to the temporary sheltering places of the New Hollanders, which he met with on the northern coast of Australia, indicating a higher degree of culture in the architects than belongs to the more southern tribes, and, as a consequence, indicating a more numerous and a more comfortable population. Aboriginals were continually met by the surveying parties who landed, the tribes being in most instances friendly and hospitable, although in some instances they displayed great ferocity and treachery, the life of the commander himself having been on one occasion placed in imminent peril by a spear hurled by a skulking black who concealed himself in a neighbouring scrub, and who succeeded in fixing his weapon in the shoulder of Captain Stokes. In the explorations of the Albert and Victoria Rivers evidences of a numerous population were constantly observed along the banks, the chief of which were several cemeteries, in which the dead were wrapped in sheets of bark and placed on hurdles elevated by means of forked supports. Passing round to Moreton Bay and Wide Bay, we find the strongest evidence in support of the supposition that the northern parts of the territory are even more thickly inhabited than the southern, in the frequency of the daring attacks of the aborigines on the stations and settlements, and in the numbers of aboriginals who have been made subservient to the

advancement of colonization, whether in the capacity of native police, or as stockmen, shepherds, and hutkeepers.

Now, taking the estimated population of New South Wales at the period of the foundation of the colony as the basis of our calculations, and dividing the entire country into divisions of an area similar to that of New South Wales, allowing to each division an amount of population equal to that of the same colony, the result of our calculations would be about half a million of inhabitants for the whole territory of New Holland. The population has been estimated at infinitely less than this, but if reliance is to be placed on the early historians of the colony, and on the reports of those at present officially interested in the question in the neighbouring colonies, there is no reason why we should not take the number above given as a very near approximation to the truth. When we reflect that the experience of each day tends to show that the country possesses the means of affording all the means of sustenance, to an extent before unthought of, and when we consider that there is no reason for doubting that those regions still untrod by Europeans are among the most prolific of all Australia—prolific, at all events, in the necessaries of aboriginal life—the conclusion becomes established, beyond doubt, that each hundred square miles of New Holland supports as many sable inhabitants as any equal extent of country yet explored. If this be admitted, to set down the aboriginal

population at half a million will not be to overrate its numerical amount.

It is not necessary to consider whether the aboriginal population of the entire country has decreased or increased since the landing of the first colonists, or to what extent such increase or decrease may have taken place. No good purpose could be served by such speculations. It is sufficient if, by fixing with any degree of accuracy the numbers of the aboriginal race, we have indicated for the benefit of such statesmen, legislators, philanthropists, missionaries, and others as may, either from a sense of duty or from feelings of humanity and religious obligation, be disposed to turn their attention to the reclamation of that race, the extent of the field on which they purpose to expend all or a portion of their labours.

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